SOWING IN TEARS
REAPING IN JOY

131 fusible.

SOWING IN TEARS REAPING IN JOY

A COLLECTION OF FUNERAL SERMONS
BY LUTHERAN PASTORS IN AMERICA

With an Appendix

THE BURIAL SERVICE

Arranged In Accordance With Standard Liturgical Forms

By R. NEUMANN

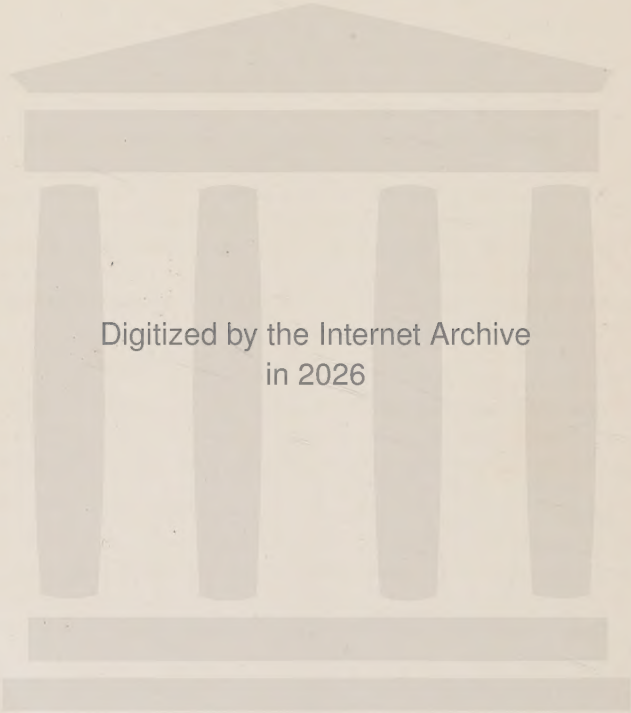
Burlington, Iowa
THE GERMAN LITERARY BOARD
Nineteen Hundred Twelve

COPYRIGHT 1912
By R. NEUMANN
BURLINGTON, IOWA

INDEX.

PAGE.

1. Behold, I Come Quickly. A sermon in memory of the dead. Rev. 3:11 5
2. David's Child and Yours. On the death of a child. 2 Sam. 12:23 11
3. It Is Well With the Child. 2 Kings 4:26 16
4. Jesus and the Children. Luke 18: 15, 17 20
5. God's Providence. On the accidental death of a boy 14 years old. John 13:7 26
6. Thy Brother Shall Rise Again. On the death of a young man. John 11: 22-23; Luke 7:15 31
7. Come and Hear, All Ye That Fear God. On the death of a young man who died of tuberculosis. Psalm 66:16 37
8. The Lord Is My Shepherd. On the death of a young mother. Psalm 23 49
9. The Master is Come. On the death of a young Christian. John 11:28 58
10. To Die Is Gain. On the death of a woman. Philippians 1:21 62
11. The Limit and the Reach of Life. On the death of a man. Psalm 39:4 68
12. The Sure Remedy Against Death. On the death of a pastor. John 11:25-26 74
13. Death as a Friend. General. Philippians 1:21 85
14. A Genuine Christian. 2 Samuel 23:4 94
15. A Message of Comfort at the Grave of Our Loved Ones. Isaiah 40:1 98
16. The Resurrection and the Life. John 11:25-26 102
17. Sin and Death. Romans 5:12 111
18. The Death of Saints in the Sight of God. Psalm 116:15 121
19. Suicide—Workingman. Genesis 4:7 131
20. The Grand Army in Prophecy. An address for Memorial Day. Ezekiel 37:10 134
21. Appendix. The Burial Service 151


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/snowingintearsre0000rneu

I.

"BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!"

A Sermon in Memory of the Dead.

BY THE REV. R. NEUMANN, A. M., BURLINGTON, IA.

"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."—*Rev. 3: 11.*

HERE is no question, which, when sincerely put and answered, will throw a clearer light on our inner life, than this one: "What do you think of death?" Are you afraid of death? Is the thought of death a terrible one to your mind? Do you avoid thinking about it? Or, is the messenger of God a friend of yours, in whom you have all confidence? Will you be able to lift up your eyes joyfully at His coming, since it means to you freedom from all sorrow and vexation? Certainly, it must ever be a serious thing to stand at a death-bed, to walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Not only do we face separation from those whom we love, but also our eternal destiny is before us. In view of death we are face to face with the irrevocable, unchangeable eternity. Nevertheless, death should not be a cause of fear to the christian, but rather of joy, since by death we realize our hope of eternal salvation.

How little there is of this faith among us! How often is this lack of faith evident even among people otherwise serious in thought and life. How much fear of death!

The answer to the question, "What do you think of death?" depends on the reply which we are able to give to another question: "What do you think of Christ?" Has Jesus become your personal Savior? Have you come to Him, not only as a child in Holy Baptism, but have you come to Him as a poor sinner, seeking peace for your soul? Have you Christ's own assurance: "Be of good cheer, my son, my daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee." Have you by repentance attained to joyous faith in your Savior? Have you by faith embraced life eternal? Do you with gladness look forward to behold the face of your Savior? How do you suppose the disciple whom Jesus loved, John, the seer of the revelation, must have felt, when he heard the voice of his Master: "Behold, I come quickly!" A word this is of holy earnestness, and of blessed promise at the same time. "Behold"—the voice of the Lord. This language of Scripture always announces something great, be it formidable or promising. The blind man, who has never seen the light of day, who knows nothing of the beauty of the sunshine or the star-lit sky, misses much. It is not God's will that we like him should pass through life with our eyes closed to the glory of creation. Arise early in springtime, go out into the woods, across the fields before the dew has dried, before man's activity disturbs the holy quiet of the morning; or, open the window at night, and gaze out upon the starry skies, gauge distance, fathom space, conceive the worlds which like our own planet people those infinite depths: All these behold, and ponder: all

things are vanity. The flower withers, strong buildings will crumble, the mighty of the earth will return to dust. Behold, all things are but vanity.

But when our Savior admonishes from His throne on high: "Behold," He then utters a word of consolation and hope for His disciples in distress, for His church, destined to encounter danger and persecution. As Noah watched for the dove, until, after the waters had receded, it returned with the olive-leaf in its bill, so did the christian of the early church look for the return of Christ. As the sailor after the weariness of the voyage rejoices to sight the lighthouse, to hear the call: "Land ahead!" so should the christian feel when in the distance he beholds the promised land. Imagine the joy thrilling the heart of John on hearing the voice of Jesus: "Behold, I come quickly!" "Behold!" This word is like the dawn of a new day.

The Lord adds: "I come quickly." Strange to say, the two who form the greatest contrast, Christ and death, death and the Prince of Life, have often been confused. At times death seems to come as a deliverer. Here lies a man in great torment, hopelessly afflicted, sunk in mental darkness, awaking from time to time only to realize his condition. When death ends such a sad existence, some are prone to speak of death as a deliverance. Be not deceived. Death in itself is a physical occurrence. Death may end physical torment, yet it does not deliver. Death means nothing more than the separation of body and soul. And for that reason, it means decision, judgment. The Judge is He who said of Himself: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." Christ is the only deliverer, and He says to us, *"I* come." "It is I," these were words of

comfort in the days when Christ was among men. "It is I, be not afraid,"—thus He consoled His disciples in the night of the storm on the sea. There will be a time, indeed, when people shall be afraid, and when some will despair in looking for the things which are to come. It is possible that, even in the hour of death, all this world's trials will once more assail us, that we be filled with fear to despair. Only as we hold fast the faith in Him who still says: "Be not afraid, it is I," in whom we have hoped, will there be light around and within us, and we shall be comforted by the voice of the Deliverer from all evil, saying: "Behold, *I* come."

Indeed, He *comes!* No other part of the christian faith, among the believers of the apostolic church, had a significance to that of the doctrine of the return of Christ. Truly, it must have been a severe test of their faith; when the Lord tarried. On His return was based the evidence of the truth of His cause. Things have changed. There are now thousands of christians who never think of the latter-day. To-day the Lord would come unawares to many, as a thief in the night. This world of ours may continue to exist for another century, yes, for a thousand years more. But as sure as all the other promises of the Lord have been fulfilled, His resurrection, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost, the judgment of Jerusalem, so surely also shall this prophecy be fulfilled, the prophecy of the day of judgment for all. Inevitably it is approaching, your judgment day, every hour means a step toward that end.

Thanks be to God, our Savior COMES to meet us. If He were not to come, we would have to make the way alone; if there were none to stand by us in the hard battle, if no

ray of light fell into our last dark hour, how few would there be to stand fast on their last day. This is our comfort, Jesus comes to meet us. As the father meets the prodigal son, Jesus stretches out His hands towards us, "Come unto me all that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." If at last the burden should become too heavy, so that you should be tempted to sigh: "O Lord, how long!", should be tempted to think that He had forgotten you, be not dismayed. He has not forgotten you, He will come to take you home, His promise never fails: "Behold, I *come* quickly!"

"Quickly." A word of ambiguous sound. A sad word, when a life, humanly speaking, has closed too soon, when a beloved child is snatched away, when a young man or a happy bride has been summoned. Yet, even when the days of their years have been four-score years and ten, when the strength of life has been labor and sorrow, when it has been rich in love and in distress, even then, when the message comes from afar, that he, whom you have known from the days of youth is no more, even then you can hardly imagine it; his face you will see no more. "We are soon cut off and we fly away." Time seems long when as the dark future it lies before us; how short when it has sunk into the past! The Lord comes, who knows how quickly?

Quickly. A glad sound also is heard in this word. The German Bible says: "Bald," soon. This word makes light the most trying experience. "It will soon be Christmas," what a joy this message brings to the heart of the child. "We will soon be home," how this prospect brings new strength to the weary feet. "The doctor will soon be here." The announcement means relief and new hope to

the poor sufferer. So on the dying-bed, the believing soul will draw consolation from the thought: Soon it will all be over. Our whole christian life is a seed-time of hope. Every true christian has felt the longing that breathes in Abraham Lincoln's favorite hymn:

"I will sing you a song of that beautiful land,
The far-away home of the soul,
Where no storms ever beat on the glittering strand,
While the years of eternity roll."

No true christian he, who will not delight in the thought of beholding Him, to whom we owe the best in life, for whom our soul is longing, so that even death cannot frighten it, but rather makes it jubilant, when His voice is heard from heaven: "Behold, I come quickly!"

This is our christian hope. How far are we from embracing this blessed faith? Whenever death enters among us, taking away one whom we loved, deep mourning seizes us. We know that "to die is gain," yet we act as if we did not believe it. In the church-year that is now passing, death has knocked on many a door. What a comfort to know to-day that many of the blessed dead have been victorious. May God help us all to grow ever firmer and more joyous in faith, in order that we may await our dying hour without fear, and that finally with longing and great joy we may hear the voice of the great Shepherd of the sheep: "Behold, I come quickly!" Amen.

II.

DAVID'S CHILD—AND YOURS.

On the Death of a Child.

BY THE REV. R. B. PEERY, PH. D., ATCHISON, KAN.

"Now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."—*II Samuel 12: 23.*

UR hearts are heavy as we come together to-day. Death is always an unwelcome visitor; but when he lays his cold hand on the little child, the pride and joy of the home, and takes him away forever, how sad and lonely does he leave us! How empty and vain life then seems! How dark our sky! And how gloomy and forbidding the future!

But even in these bitterest and saddest hours we can find much in our christian faith to give comfort and cheer. Thank God, we have a religion that can throw light into the darkest night, and sustain us in the most trying day.

King David's beloved son, the idol of his heart, lay sick unto death. Thinking that penitence and prayers might prevail with God and yet save the child, the father dressed himself in sackcloth, sat on the earthen floor of his tent, heaped dust and ashes on his head, and cried out mightily

to the Lord for help. The elders of his house, with the servants, came to raise him up and console him; but he refused to be comforted. They set meat and drink before him, but he left them untasted.

By and by the child died. The elders feared to tell the king; but he surmised what had happened by the manner in which they stood talking among themselves. So he beckoned them to him, enquired, and learned that his dear son was dead. Then David at once arose, washed his face, dressed his hair, put on his usual garments, went into the house of the Lord, and worshipped; and afterward he commanded meat and drink to be set before him His astonished servants said, "Why, my Lord, O King, when the child was sick you dressed in sackcloth and ashes, prayed and fasted, and refused to be comforted. Now that he is dead, do you at once put away grief, and eat and drink?"

David very wisely replied: "While the child was yet alive I fasted and prayed, thinking haply God might yet spare his life. But now he is dead. Why should I fast and mourn? He cannot return to me; but I can go to him."

These words show David's faith, and the source of his help and comfort.

I. *He believed that his beloved child yet lived.*

As the Old Testament so often says, the boy had only been "gathered to his fathers." The spirit was immortal, and had simply gone on into "Abraham's Bosom." Death had not ended that little life, but had transformed it, and removed it from earthly view. David felt assured in regard to his son, knowing that he was safe in the hands of Jehovah.

May you, my dear friends, experience the same comfort in regard to your precious little one. His spirit has gone on to be with God who gave it. Jesus, who so loved the children, and took them up in His arms and blessed them, has received him unto Himself. Given to the Lord in Holy Baptism, he was already a member of the Heavenly Family, and has now taken his rightful place there in the many Mansions.

It is hard for you to give him up. Hard to think that nevermore in this world will you feel his warm, soft hand, look on his happy face, or hear his sweet, young voice again. But you are resigning him to One who has a better right than yourselves.

A certain Oriental monarch was a great lover of flowers. He had many parks and greenhouses, filled with strange and costly plants. Most precious of them all was a lily, exceedingly rare, secured in a far-away southern clime. He committed this to the special care of his head gardener, who jealously nursed and tended it as he would a favorite child. Under his loving care the delicate lily grew and flourished. Soon he noticed a little shoot springing out, that promised to bear flowers. Very tenderly did he now nurse it day after day, watching it grow and develop, until it seemed just ready to blossom. Next morning he was on the ground early, expecting that the petals had at last opened into a matchless lily to reward his love. But to his surprise and horror, the plant was gone. Some one had removed it during the night. Just when he anticipated the sweet reward, this heavy disappointment came. With a sad and bitter heart, he called his helpers one by one, and angrily asked who had done this thing. They denied all respon-

sibility for it; but finally he found a boy who said: "I saw the King himself walking early in the gardens; I saw him stop at the lily, drink in its fragrance, kiss its newly-opened petals, and then carry it away to the palace in his arms."

With joy shining through tears, the gardener said: "A great honor has come to my lily: the King himself has taken it into his private chambers, there to be in his own sacred presence. I gladly give it up to our Master and King.

Even so, christian friends, can you not give up your fairest flower to our Master? A great honor has come to your child. The Lord and Maker of us all has taken him unto Himself, to be in His immediate presence; and you should be resigned to His will, and comforted over your great loss.

II. *David believed that he would sometime see his boy again.*

He said: "He cannot come to me, but I can go to him." Into that Land of the Leal, whither the little one had gone, the King himself hoped to find entrance; and to meet there, and recognize, the darling of his heart. This hope enabled him to take up again the burdens of life, and bear them bravely; and at his own departure I doubt not his hope was fully realized.

It is a blessed and most comforting thought that, while our loved ones cannot return to us, we can go to them. The cruel parting need not be forever. There may be a glorious reunion by and by, if we will have it so.

Jesus is the way which leads to that happy land. Any man may go to the Father, and to those that rest in His

Bosom, by means of this Living Way. He freely invites you to come; and to find peace, pardon, and salvation through Him. If you want to meet again those "whom you have loved long since, and lost awhile," you must accept Christ and live as His disciple; for in Him alone is salvation and eternal life.

May God comfort the bereaved parents and friends, enabling them to realize that their beloved child now lives in the Glory Land, where they may join him in God's own good time!

"I cannot say, and I will not say,
That he is dead—he is just away.
With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land,
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since he lingers there.

"And you—O you, who the wildest yearn,
For the old-time step and the glad return,—
Think of him faring on, as dear
In the love of There as the love of Here;
Think of him still the same, I say—
He is not dead—he is just away."

III.

"IT IS WELL WITH THE CHILD."

Funeral Discourse on the Death of a Little Child.

BY THE REV. EDWARD NELANDER, PH. D., LOS ANGELES, CAL.

"Is it well with the child?" and she answered, "It is well."—*2 Kings 4: 26.*

A DARK shadow was resting upon the once happy home in Shunem. The prophet sent his servant Gehazi ahead to make inquiries as to the well-being of the family. The Shunamite woman was asked by Gehazi, "Is it well with thee?" She was mourning over a dead child and yet she said, "It is well," for she felt that in some way the trial would be blessed. Gehazi asks, "Is it well with thy husband?" He was stricken in years and at death's door, yet she answered, "It is well." Then came the question that tore her very heartstrings, "Is it well with the child?" for her child lay dead in the house. He had gone out with the reapers, when suddenly the laborers saw him put his hands against his temples and cry out, "My head, my head." They carried him to his mother. Pathetically the story adds, "He sat on her knees till noon, and then died." Yet she persists in saying, "It is well with the child," because she is persuaded that its

spirit was safe in the keeping of God. You will be able to say with the Shunamite woman, "It is well with the child," when you

1. *Consider the sorrows your child has escaped.*

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward," and your child was no exception to the rule. Having yourself tasted the bitterness of life, you ought to be content to know that your child has escaped it all. It is hard for you, but blessed for your departed one.

It has escaped the evils of sin. The fact is, that this life is full of peril. Yours is not the bitter sorrow of David, going up the stairs of his palace, his heart breaking as he went, crying, "O Absalom! my son! my son! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom! my son, my son." "It is easier to carry a dead cross than a living one." Looking back upon our experience we can but thank God that departed children have been spared our sorrows, and our sins. "My beloved is gone down into his garden..... to gather lilies." He saw one lovely, but tender and susceptible. He gathered it, lest the coming tempest spoil its beauty. "Taken from the evil to come."

2. The words of the Shunamite woman remind us that *the child is eternally safe.*

It was not safe here. When the great Friend of children stoops down and leans toward the cradle and takes the little one to His bosom, it is that it may forever be safe in the arms of Jesus.

"O to have died in childhood," has been the plaint of many a soul under the conviction of sin. These little ones

are not lost. We know where they are. "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." They are at once at home in every golden street and fully engaged in the adoration of their Lord. They are still yours. They have not been transferred to another family. If your own heart is given to Jesus and heaven is your eternal home, they will be waiting for you at the gate of heaven. You are still *en route* for the fatherland; they have gone ahead to the home country.

Yes they are safe. It is well with them and it shall be ours....."to meet at length

> After life's tempest, under a clear sky
> And count our band, and find with keenest joy
> None wanting".....

Can we not, then, with confidence surrender them for awhile into His holy keeping?

3. You will be able the better to appropriate to yourself the comfort of the words, "It is well with the child," if you call to mind that *departed children are now in glory.*

> "Around the throne of God in heaven
> Ten thousand children stand,"

and yours among them. It is eternally well with the child. Is it sad to have done with sadness? Is it sorrowful to part with sorrow?

Of all the world's great teachers there was not one who like Jesus stretched out His arms to the children saying, "Suffer them to come unto me"; and shall He not now see to it that they have at His right hand "pleasures forevermore"?

To have a child in heaven is to have our hearts bound about with a golden chord that is gently drawing our steps upward. It is a loving admonition to believe with the unquestioning faith of a child without which we cannot enter the kingdom of God Now, as never before, angel fingers will beckon you onward, angel voices will speak to you in the silent hours of trial, and angel smiles will cheer you in the dark valley. And doubly sweet will it be to remember that in the angelic host is one you loved and gave up to God.

Every bereaved mother can mingle a smile with the weeping and say, "I am the mother of an angel"; and parents may rejoice to know that, whatever of vicissitudes they may themselves be called upon to experience, the light of the christian hope falls upon the grave of each departed little one and a Voice out of heaven declares, "It is well with the child."

IV.

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN.

BY THE REV. FRED. V. CHRIST, NEW YORK CITY.

"And they brought unto Him also infants that He should touch them, but when His disciples saw it they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto Him and said, suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in nowise enter therein."—*Luke 18: 5: 17.*

HEN a very old person dies we are likely to be philosophical and therefore prosaic. When a person who has long been sick dies we become charitable and sympathetic. But when a baby dies we are probably nearer to sadness of a real sort than in the other cases. There is less philosophy there. We cannot say—well he had a long life full of rich experience. Nor can we say: It is better so because he suffered so much. And as the other deaths are prosaic so the baby's is poematical. It comes and touches us nearer the imaginative point, because it is harder to explain it or give an adequate reason. Yet this difference is only a relative one. For we are all children and the difference between a man and child is not so great. In the matter of time and his mark which we name age, how little difference between the baby and the

grown-up person. Death comes stealing on. We depart. Like an innkeeper he taps us on the shoulder and says: time to retire. We fall asleep like children for we are children. In the pilgrimage of life we are all traveling the same way. With laugh and shout or dirge according to our parts we wend our way into the infinite. And as we go the Voice out of the dark says to us: "You can no longer have your erstwhile companion, from now on you go alone. You may only carry that one in the folds of your memory." And when it happens so, as so it must, we murmur and enter foolishly into a rebellion, asking why must it be so. In a spiritual sense the text which you read above is daily enacted by some one. In the beautiful city of God, arrayed in His pristine and assumed glory, sits the Master. Around Him are the ministering angels, ready to do His will, as it is written that angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven. So they come and bring little children unto Him. At each word, suffer the little children to come unto Me—multitudes of angels bring them to the Master. We say they are dead. But He knows they have only begun to live. We are sorry they have left this beautiful world and friends and mothers. But He knows they go to a better world and, with all due respect to father and mother, a better Friend. In our blindness of the inner eye we rebuke the angels—ministers of His—for bringing "our" children to Christ. But His words are true, as He calms us and assures us, that they have come to Him because they belong to His Kingdom. Do not my friend grieve unnecessarily for your departed children. Rather submit to the Master's word and with true faith learn to let Him govern you in all things. And then a little child

shall lead you. Just as that child snuggled up close to you and with a simple trust went to sleep. So God wants you to learn from Him to rest in quiet confidence upon the sure promises and power which He possesses and will use for you to the uttermost. He even goes further and says that unless you become like a little child in simple faith you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. You see in a very real way a little child leads you, for His example has taught you how to have the right trust in God. And often all this is not so unusual to think of all of us as children. Are we not all mere children by comparison? Think of the power of His goodness, who calls you children.

"O God of our salvation who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth—and of them that are afar off upon the sea—which by His strength sets fast the mountains; being girded with power which stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves and the tumult of the people. They also that dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at Thy tokens; Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice; Thou visitest the earth and waterest it; Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God which is full of water; Thou preparest them corn when Thou hast so provided for it; Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly; Thou settlest the furrows thereof; Thou makest it soft with showers; Thou blessest the springing thereof; Thou crownest the year with Thy goodness and Thy paths drop fatness. They drop upon the pastures of the wilderness and the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the valleys are covered over with corn; they shout for joy; they also sing." With this description we may add: For who in Heaven can be com-

pared unto the Lord, who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened unto the Lord?

Yet we may be likened to Him in that we are His children indeed as christians. O, if we could only get rid of that pride of heart which refuses to trust God's almighty power in control of almighty love.

You remember once when Christ was with the disciples in the little boat on the Lake of Galilee. The wind came up and lashed the waters unto a fury. Then the disciples were afraid and came and asked that very natural but very foolish question: "Lord, dost Thou not care lest we perish?" Their pride was gone, what were *they* against the waves and wind? But they had not faith. Christ said: "Oh ye of little faith, why are you afraid? Afraid at a gust of wind in the Father's house—and with the Master here too?" Then He stretched out His hand and blessed the waves. "Peace be still," He said, and it was so. Ah, just to treat this Father's great world as a child his home. What peace, joy, aye, what Kingdom of God is then ours?

Well then, your little one is gone. Only now you have laid him away. Will you remember that the Master has called the little one? And that he wants you to be in simplicity of faith like your child, so that both of you may in His own good time enter into the city of God?

A little child visiting her uncle in his down-town office saw this infidelic philosophic placard on the wall over his desk:

"God is nowhere."

She looked at it and with simple faith said: Uncle, your letters are in the wrong place. They should read:

"God is now here."

So philosophy seeks God and wanders in the wilderness of disappointment. While faith without motion or effort appropriates God and exemplifies the truth of Scripture:

Thou shalt be satisfied.

Do not try to reason so much about death; rather take Christ's statements and rest on them. That indeed death is a result of sin but that Christ overcomes sin and death because He is the life, the light, the love—the life which He gives and takes away that we may have more life; the light which shines unearthly and was never on land or sea, which is the light which lightheth every man; and the love which is so boundless that it encompasses and covers sin—and becomes the resting place of all the children of men. Today, weary and sorrowful, in your bereavement in a larger sense go to this bosom of Jesus. Love and take a quiet rest. Let Him redeem that promise to come unto Him when weary and heavy laden. Then those sorrows, as heavy as the sands of the sea, will disappear in the greater love which becomes yours. You will realize the completeness with which Christ can take care of your child by realizing how completely He takes care of you. He can, He will, if you let Him.

This present house of ours, how frail,
How little makes it earth.
A tent—a temple—still a jail,
How little is it worth.

A new one crave we for our own
To last beyond the age,
That never can be battered down
By any tempter's rage.

Secure we ask it Lord of Thee,
We of ourselves must fall.
Clothe us with immortality,
For Thou art all in all

The peace of God which passeth understanding, keep, your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

V.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE.

BY THE REV. S. P. LONG, D. D., MANSFIELD, O.

ON July 11, 1912, William Martin Luther, son of the Rev. W. C. B. Harris, of Oregon, Ill., an only son and child 14 years of age, fell into the Rock River and was drowned. The funeral was held in Mansfield, Ohio, July 16th, the old family home, and Rev. S. P. Long, D. D., preached a short funeral sermon from the following text: "Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13, 7. He said in part:

There are some who would claim to honor God by saying that He had absolutely nothing to do with the event which calls us together in this sad hour; but when He reveals to us the unexpected fact that He numbers the hairs on our heads, and counts the sparrows as they fall, I am sure that He counted this boy when he fell into the Rock River; and it does not solve our difficulties to say that He had nothing to do with this event. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps." Prov. 16, 9. The God who numbereth our hairs, sees us here this afternoon and we would be blind, if we did not recognize the Hand of Providence in this hour.

I. *What has God done?* "What I do," said Jesus. What has Jesus done for you? Certainly He gave you a son 14 years ago. When this child was born, I am sure you recognized the fact that God gave him to you. And all these years you have watched this gift of God grow in your home.

By holy baptism as a child you gave him back to God, and He accepted him. From the bottom of your hearts you have believed that he was God's child.

Again you instructed him in the way of salvation and in Akron, Ohio, it was a happy day when your son, as God's child, confirmed the baptismal covenant and Jesus gave him His body to eat and His blood to drink. All this is freely admitted.

Now let me add a few more things God did:

He took this son from you. He is no more in your home, nor in this life. The fact that he was an only son did not keep Him who gave His only begotten Son to die for us from taking him from you. Nor did He keep him here any longer because he was an only child. Nor did He come and warn you. Little did you parents think the morning of July 11th when the father and the son started down to the river to fish that God was fishing for your boy that day. All this is done and we are here now to hear God speak to our bereaved hearts. Shall we find fault with God? Wait!

II. Let Jesus speak! "What I do *thou knowest not now.*" In the presence of the dead here are a few lessons for the heart; and not for the head. Of course, God is hard

to understand, especially now. God's plans are too great to be comprehended by us. I often hear heaven described as a place where we shall enter and understand and comprehend everything! I shall refer to this a little later; but let me say right here that the God whom I worship is too great ever to be comprehended by all His saints and even the holy angels.

God's principles are to test His children. Testing is complimenting. It is a compliment to the gold to send it through the fires. If God's children must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of heaven, then certainly God's servants must not expect to escape the tests.

After all, who are we that we should try to understand God? How far do we have to go till we reach our limitations? Where were we when the morning stars sang together and God made His eternal plans?

And because we are prone to accuse ourselves when accidents befall us, or our dear ones, therefore we also cannot understand God as we should in the present. Remember, I have not even hinted that we shall not understand God better than we now do.

One reason that God does things hard to understand is this: He wants to exercise our faith. What we understand requires no faith. Here is the test: when we cannot see at all why God should do as He does, then to trust Him, that is faith!

III. Jesus will not always keep us in the dark. "What I do thou knowest not now; *but thou shalt know hereafter.*"

Jesus did not keep Peter in the dark long. Light came in a short time. It seems to me the light is breaking in on

us right now. If some one had said to you as parents a few weeks ago: What would you do, if your son would be suddenly snatched from your home and from this life? I suppose you would have said: "We could never stand it!" But you are standing it. Jesus is sustaining you now. He will be with you every hour and help to bear all your burdens and take the heavy end of all on His own shoulder.

You know that your son is safe. Not all preacher's sons are safe. Ingersol was a preacher's son. The worst boy I know right now is a preacher's son. This is not a rule, but an exception. It is remarkable how many great men and statesmen are preachers' sons. I shall make the prediction that the next president of the United States will be a preacher's son. But no preacher's son is as safe at the age of 14 in this sinful world as in the kingdom of heaven.

And how this trial and the sustaining hand of God will effect your power of preaching and comforting others hereafter! Do not do as I have seen others do: refuse to be comforted yourself. Now is the time to go home and show the people in the church and outside, what the grace of God can do for one in trouble. If we ministers of the Gospel cannot trust God, who shall? If we cannot comfort ourselves, how shall we comfort others? When you return home and can say to others that you had to give up the only child you had, and God was so good to you, as I know He was to me and us when He took our only son, that tells of a power that the world and many in the church never found.

This is not so sad. It does not mean separation; but only a short absence. William has gone before; and you are coming. Somewhere, sometime, soon, you will all meet

again. If you will do all that you see before you, I am sure that it will seem but a few days till there will be a great grand reunion in the place which Jesus said He was preparing for you. Oh the power of the great Gospel of Jesus Christ! Oh the goodness of God that can comfort His children in any trial! Grant it to us all now. Amen.

VI.

THY BROTHER SHALL RISE AGAIN.

BY THE REV. FRED. V. CHRIST, NEW YORK CITY.

"But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, thy brother shall rise again."—*Jno. 11: 22, 23.*

"And he that was dead sat up and began to speak and He delivered him to his mother. And there came a great fear upon all and they glorified God, saying that a great prophet has risen up among us. And that God hath visited His people."—*Luke 7: 15.*

HESE two texts are from different narratives, but they are alike in that a young man was raised from the dead in each incident. Martha makes her marvelous declaration of faith. That whatsoever we ask of God He will give it, and Christ confirms her wish by saying thy brother shall rise again. In the second instance Christ has just demonstrated His power over death in that He resurrected a son and restored him to his mother. He also proved His knowledge and power in the other instance and called back the brother of Martha after he had a four days' journey with death. I have taken the last one to supplement the first because of the effect it had on the ones who saw it. Fear fell

upon them. They glorified God. They confessed the Great Prophet and saw a manifestation of God in his actions.

We, my friends, are likely to say with Martha: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." When we see our friend or brother or sister cold in death, that is the natural way, but the supernatural way adds also Martha's declaration of faith, that even now whatever we ask of God He will grant. Martha had the strange experience of having Christ present in person and ready and powerful as God to do her will in this case. He told her that the brother would rise. And he did, at the command of Jesus, come forth. It was the same with the mother of the boy. They bore him along. They were stopped. Jesus restored his life and presented him to his mother. So Jesus acted in the presence of death. They were distinct miracles which have ceased to be performed as then. They were, and are unique in the history of humanity. They had the peculiar effect therefore on the spectators.

Fear fell upon all. They had seen the mystery of life without a tremor, because it is so common. But when Christ showed them the mystery of God's life imparted they were filled with astonishment. They beheld the daily battle of life and death in their own bodies—because life is only the sum total of one fight against death, and thought little of it. But here they saw a retreat turned into a victory. They could under the circumstances only conclude that God was at work. Robert Browning has tried to picture for us the wonder and fear of an old Jewish physician on hearing this marvelous occurrence. He tries to "explain" it, but his refrain is, "It is strange."

"This man so cured regards the curer, then,
As—God forgive me! who but God Himself,
Creator and Sustainer of the world,
That came and dwelt in flesh on it awhile."

And he ends his "Epistle":

"The very God! think Abib; dost thou think?
So the all-great were the all-loving too—
So through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying: 'O heart, I made, a heart beats here!
Face my hands fashioned, see it in myself!
Thou hast no power, nor mayest conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee!'
The madman saith He said so—it is strange."

So the onlookers in the presence of this life and death struggle saw in life's victory a manifestation of that which is more than human. They were amazed, and fearful, and then

They glorified God.

It is natural for us in thinking of this to suppose that we too would have glorified God when He raised the dead. We would have done so. But the life which arises in the soul of one who is dead in sin is as great or greater manifestation of God's power and love than a mere physical life restored. For after all, this body is but a tent, or a tabernacle, or a temple, or a prison house, and to restore it even as the greatest of miracles is of second importance. It is dust. But this soul of ours—The holy of holies where God may dwell, which is immortal and under the right condition *forever* with the Lord. But which under the wrong condition is *dead* in sin. How altogether important that it be

raised. So the christian stands in the presence of the miracle of regeneration and he must be blind indeed if he do not glorify his God. But the christian will also add the following words and confess that

"A Great Prophet is risen up among us."

This is a confession of the great didactic powers of the resurrection as exemplified and demonstrated by Christ in His own life and the life of others. Christ must have meant to teach by these miracles, for if He did them for mere love or sympathy, He would not neglect all the other mourners. These miracles were but fore-runners of His own resurrection to show us—that what He did for others He could do for Himself. And that as He did for Himself what no other human being could do. So He will do for us what we ourselves cannot do. These people recognized a supernatural being. They added that

"God has visited His people."

This is the ultimate conclusion to which we come no matter where we start in the life of the Master. And it is the one thing which can bring us comfort in our bereavements. In following the life of Christ we are aware of an unusual character throughout the whole course. Our love and amazement grows apace until we stand before the empty tomb and hear those words of comfortable hope:

"He is risen."

We contemplate the whole life and realize how that empty tomb fills our empty life. That empty sepulchre is the guarantee that some day all shall hear the voice of the Son of God and rise. But it is conditioned by our learning to recognize the Voice here and now. We may test those words of Martha with our spiritual longings for a better

life—a new life rising out of our dead selves, and we may be assured that not only our brother and sister shall rise again, but that we too shall receive our reward if we obey that Voice. We may have the assurance that like to that widow we shall have our sons, daughters and friends given to us—when God shall manifest Himself again to His people. When in the presence then of the spiritual life of Christ, and the fear of wonder grips you, glorify your Father who is in heaven. And in all your thoughts of your departed children or friends, associate the Great Prophet, Jesus Christ, with a conquered death and remember, above all, that in Him God hath visited His people. He will bless you abundantly as He did these sisters, as He did that widow. Only in faith await His own good time who knows best, and does best, whose simplest effort is the very best.

Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:
For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so—one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No, let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,

Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears,
Of pain, darkness and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements rage, the fiend voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!

VII.

"COME AND HEAR ALL YE THAT FEAR GOD."

BY THE REV. S. SCHILLINGER, A. M., WEST ALEXANDRIA, O.

Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.—*Psalm 66: 16.*

ORROWING Widow, Mother, Sisters, Relatives and Friends:

We are again called upon to witness the sad truth of mortality. We have before us a young man of but three decades and one year. If life is sweet at any time it surely is at that age. When considering his young widow, his widowed mother and two sisters, and that he being the only son and brother, we would say, humanely speaking, "that he had much for which to live." If we had had it to decide, he would be alive now, hearty and strong. But God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. God had a different course marked out for him than we, and called upon him to seal, with his young life, in the prime of manhood, that for which He wanted him to live. As God's children, it behooves us now to be resigned to His good and gracious will. To wish him back would be to wish him a misfortune. Such wishes indeed crowd themselves into our hearts. We do not just say that they are

sinful. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

They are a mistake common to the infirmities of our flesh. But suppose those lips now sealed in death should speak; what do you think they would say? Would they be apt to speak of the paltry affairs of this world? Would they lavish their strength in praise of the sinful pleasures of this world? Or would they not much rather, after having tasted the sweet pleasures of heaven, say: "Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." This is what the Psalmist, the man after God's own heart, lavished his strength in proclaiming. That which God did for their souls is what the Patriarchs of old saw with the eyes of faith, for they saw the Son of God, the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," the Rock of salvation, the Door to the kingdom of heaven. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

"But now they desire a better country, that is a heavenly; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city." God gave it into the heart of the Psalmist also to know what wonderful things God did for him; therefore he exultantly exclaims: "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble."

His soul was comforted in trouble. Our souls must be comforted in this hour of sadness by the precious Word

of God. The Psalmist again says: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law," and once more: "For thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us, as silver is tried."

May you be further comforted in your great affliction while we consider by the grace of God

WHO ARE EMBRACED IN THE WORDS OF OUR TEXT?

Answer:

I. *They who hear.*

II. *They who fear.*

III. *They who veer.*

"Come and hear." Nathanael first learned with the sense of hearing from the lips of Philip that they had found Him of whom Moses and prophets wrote, and then when Nathanael doubted whether anything good could come out of Nazareth, Philip said to him: "Come and see." Hearing is faith's seeing. Mercy comes to us by the ear-gate. Hear, and your souls shall live! "Jesus saith unto him: Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet believed." That means blessed are they who hear and believe. Believe what?

1. That God created them, and that to His glory. That is the object of the creation. Come and hear how wonderfully God has made you to His glory. There is much comfort already in knowing that God is our Creator and that we are His creatures. If this were not true the Scriptures would not so frequently speak of the wonderful works of the creation, among which man, who was made a little lower than the angels, is chief among the visible

creatures. Because God created man a rational being, giving him body and soul, therefore His praise from man is the more highly pleasing in His sight. This is what the true child of God ever remembers, and keeps steadily in his mind that the highest aim of his life is the glory and praise of his God. The Psalmist says: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." In every age the children of God catch the refrain of David's song, and from truly believing hearts, praise their Creator who has so fearfully and wonderfully made them. In this truth they find comfort in the hour of death, for they know that they do not leave this world as the brute, but that there is another world, a world of perfect happiness for all believers, in which they shall enjoy a perfect realization of the glory and praise of Him who made them so wonderfully.

2. But we want to hear also how wonderfully God has redeemed us. It calms our troubled souls in the hour of affliction to be assured that God so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son to die for our sins. This is, no doubt, also what the sacred singer had in his mind when he said: "Come and hear . . . . and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." He hath redeemed it from sin, from death and from the power of the devil. This is the comforting truth Jesus imparts to Martha and Mary in time of affliction, when their only brother had died, for He said to them: "I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." These are words of comfort when the soul is sad, and the truth they express centers in the work of redemption Come and

hear therefore, not only upon ordinary occasions, but when your hearts would almost break with sadness over the death of loved ones, what the dear Savior has done for you when He suffered and died upon the cross for your sins. Some think it is inappropriate to preach the Gospel upon a funeral occasion, but did not the Savior die? And He died that we might be comforted at all times, and particularly in the hour of death. Where is the christian's comfort if it is not in the Savior and in the great work He accomplished?

3. "Come and hear . . . and I will declare what he hath done for my soul," are comforting words directing the believer to Christ's perfect righteousness, a righteousness in which he shall appear before his God having his sins cancelled. This is the comfort the Lord gives the body of believers called the Church, of which our departed young brother was a member. We are told that "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Eph. 5, 26-27. This is the truth which soothes our weeping hearts in this hour of sadness. We have the assurance that if we are church-members in the true sense we shall be presented by the Savior to our heavenly Father, and He will accept us without the least objection. If He is satisfied with the righteousness His only begotten Son acquired He will be satisfied with all who are found in that righteousness. "Come and hear," therefore, of Christ's righteousness and be comforted in the sure hope that the departed young brother is now enjoying that righteousness in presence of his God.

4. God has not only prepared salvation for us through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, but He prepared us for salvation. He regenerates and sanctifies. "Come and hear" . . . . what God has "done for my soul." He has made me a new creature. He has brought me out of the kingdom of darkness into His glorious kingdom of light. Jesus promised His disciples a Comforter who should lead them into all truths. That Comforter has come. He is the Holy Spirit. He prepares us through the Word and sacraments to accept Christ's righteousness by faith. That is the way and the only way to become God's dear children. No wonder the Psalmist so confidently exclaims: "Come and hear . . . . and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." He realized the awful condition of his soul before conversion, and now he realizes his peaceful relation to God after conversion. This is what every true Christian must and will experience. This is, no doubt, what your husband, son and brother would say if he were to speak to you this moment. This he realized. Not simply they who hear are embraced in the words of our text, but

II. *They who fear.*

1. Of course the Word of God must be heard, and our departed brother heard it. But there is more necessary than simply to hear. The rich fool, of whom we read in the gospel, heard the Word, but he did not fear God, therefore he was a miser, who horded up everything that grew on his land, and wanted to enjoy it all himself. "But God said unto him: Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Do you remember that each definition of the commandments begins: "We should fear and

love God," etc? There is a true fear; hence our text says: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God." They who fear alone will understand. It is not a slavish fear, but a holy fear which possesses the child of God. It is a fear which clears away the mist and darkness which beclouds the soul of the unregenerate. It is a fear which subdues proud reason and brings it into believing obedience to the profound mysteries of salvation. "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom." Every true and humble Christian stands in holy awe of God's Word. The proper understanding, the understanding which God would have people obtain from His Word, will be obtained by that heart only which possesses this holy fear. The various conclusions derived at in our age is evidently due to the manifold attitude of people to the Word of God. Too many people read the Bible as they read a secular newspaper, or a book on science, allowing their blind little reason to judge in spiritual matters. That is why the doctrine of the Trinity and the Divinity of Christ is denied by same professed christians. By many reason is allowed to judge in the sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper; hence the true doctrine of both is denied. Where the true fear of God does not exist in the heart devastation must follow.

2. They who fear alone will believe what God would have them believe. That is, believe His Word in the simplicity of a little child. As a little child unreservedly believes a worthy parent so should we believe God's Word; yea even more so, for a worthy parent is notwithstanding fallible but God is infallible. He cannot and will not deceive us. It is therefore a flagrant arrogance for men to explain God's holy Word agreeable to their insignificant reason.

True fear will not allow one to quibble with the teachings of God's Word. That is why the Psalmist says: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." It is impossible to attain to a pure Evangelical faith where this holy fear does not actuate the heart. Our departed brother can be classed among those who feared the Lord, and in child-like simplicity accepted and believed the Word of God though he could not grasp its mysteries with his reason. He was never heard criticizing the profound doctrines of salvation. No scoffing word was heard from his lips. As it becometh a true christian he humbly sat at Jesus' feet.

3. They who fear God alone will listen to the Word with an interest that will benefit their immortal souls. That is after all the only right way to listen. Fault-finders and people who will not suffer the Word of God to correct them, do not listen from the right motive. When people have pet sins, and the moment they hear them reproved, become offended and leave the church, they have not listened in the spirit of humility. The humble Christian is willing to be corrected, and is thankful that his heart has been set aright. He is always willing to learn more of the truth that he may be protected against error and established in his faith in the God of his salvation. That he may be thus protected he must constantly stand in the attitude of true fear and love to his God. There is a fear and love which are harmonious, and they together awaken that keen interest which fills the soul, and enables it joyfully to exclaim: "Come and hear, all ye that fear, and I will declare what God hath done for my soul." Only he who stands in holy awe of the Word of God will be enabled rightly to realize

what great things God has done for his soul. Not without a cause do both the Psalmist and the wise man say: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Not only is that said, but "the knowledge of the holy is understanding." Prov. 9, 19. We therefore aver that a saving understanding of holy Scripture depends upon an attitude of holy awe. Such awe is not found in the person who rejects what does not suit his fancy. We never observed that spirit in our departed young brother. Although he had his weaknesses, as we all have, he was willing to concede the truth when he saw it in the light of God's Word.

4. Furthermore, they alone who fear God in the sense of Scripture will join in praising their great Benefactor. This is the final manifestation of the soul that truly hears and fears. That sweet fear which enables one to resist sin, afterward fills the heart with rejoicing. There is a sweet satisfaction when, by the grace of God, one has resisted sin. It is only by the grace of God that the christian has that holy fear which enables him to resist sin, on account of which he then rejoices and thanks God for the victory He gave him over the devil. It was that fear which enabled Joseph to say to Potifer's wicked wife: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against my God?" Joseph was a youth, by the grace of God, whom the youth of our age and of all ages would do well to follow. He was kind but resolved, he feared God, but he did not fear man. He would not sin though the prison doors stood wide open for him. In him we have a model example of true fear and love of God. Such fear keeps the christian not only from sinning against the moral law, but it puts him on his guard in every important step in life. He is careful with whom

he goes into business, that he may not be associated with men who would be a snare to his faith. A young man, whose heart is filled with the true fear of God, will be exceedingly careful when he chooses a companion for life. He will be careful that she is a christian, and they are of one mind pertaining to the doctrines of salvation. In this our departed young brother manifested his wisdom. He chose a lady of his own faith, that they might undisturbed worship at the altar of their Savior. He carefully avoided the mistake which has caused many a one to become indifferent, and finally to fall away from the church entirely. Oh, what a sad mistake many a young man makes in this regard! He takes a wife and therefore he cannot come. Luke 14, 20. Oh, that young people would take warning!

But finally not only they who hear and fear are embraced in our text, but

III. *They who veer.*

1. As soon as one learns what is sin, by the grace of God, he must turn away from it. The christian turns away from the wickedness of the world. Veering means turning from one course to another. It is used to designate the mariner's skill in turning his vessel from dangerous shoals and reefs in the ocean. There are many dangerous places on the christian's journey over the ocean of life. His faith in Jesus Christ is the pilot. It will guide him aright through the most dangerous places on his difficult voyage if he does not allow his flesh to interfere. The flesh is bent upon beclouding the eyes of the pilot. If the flesh is followed one will be sure to be dashed to pieces among the shoals. The devil and the world are ever busy in their effort to wreck the vessel. The christian must be constantly on the alert

plying his veering skill with the utmost dexterity. There are many shoals and reefs on his voyage. There is the shoal of avarice, of intemperance, of pride, of carnal pleasure, of idolatry, and many more. If he would reach the haven of life safely he must be veered from all these danerous shoals and reefs. The precious Word of God will veer him safely if he only does not interfere. As soon, however, as he becomes a little careless and indifferent, he is failing to veer from a dangerous shoal. As soon as he begins thinking he does not need to be so conscientious about hearing the Word of God regularly he is steering toward a reef. If he thinks he does not need to be so particular about believing the doctrines of salvation, that he can reject some because the world makes fun of them, he is ready to be dashed to pieces upon a dangerous rock. When the Psalmist says: "Come, and I will declare what the Lord has done for my soul," he means to say not only that his soul has been redeemed by the precious blood of his Savior, but that the Lord has veered it from destructive places. Such places must be pointed out to the Christian; the Word of God points them out and gives him wisdom and strength to steer clear of them.

2. But what follows veering from dangerous reefs and shoals? Steerage into smooth and safe waters. Thus veering from evil ways means to turn to the good. As soon as Zaccheus was converted, what did he say? "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I will restore it four-fold." Do you see how ready he was to do good and to right his wrongs? That is the course every true christian will pursue. The Holy Spirit moved

Zaccheus to make that declaration. But the Holy Spirit works through the Word. The most important good work which we, by the grace of God, can do, is to turn to God's Word. The merciful God invites, yea pleads with us to return to Him and He will have compassion upon us. This is what He exhorts back-sliding Israel to do. Though they had gone upon every mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot, yet the Lord says: "Turn thou unto me." Jer. 3, 7. Again He addresses backsliding Israel through His prophet: "Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say: Return, thou back-sliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not keep mine anger forever." Jer. 3, 12. If, after having committed great wickedness, the children of Israel should turn unto the Lord and He would hear them, and not keep His anger forever, how much more will not He hear us who cry unto Him in this time of sadness! Truly, He hears us, as He heard the Psalmist, and caused him to realize what He had done for him. Therefore the Psalmist so eloquently exclaims in the words of our text: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." He turned the Psalmist from wickedness, by bringing him to a knowledge of his awful sins, unto that which is good, viz: to salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ This is what the Lord in His mercy has done for us also. Our eternal salvation depends upon being rightly veered. This is our comfort in this hour of bereavement. We believe that we have a young man before us whom God turned, and who by the grace of God allowed himself to be turned to the good as it is found in the Savior. May He keep us in the same way until we meet again to part no more! Amen.

VIII.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD.

BY THE REV. OSCAR KAISER, MILWAUKEE, WIS.

Ps. 23.

T is a very sad occasion upon which we are gathered together. Before us in yonder casket lie the remains of one who was always hale and hearty, strong and vigorous in body and mind. Having never been ill in her life, she could at first hardly realize that she was ill, much less that her days on earth were numbered. Having a strong constitution, she had always ably and faithfully assisted her widowed mother in the many arduous household duties, and it was a heavy cross for her to feel her strength ebbing away. Married but two years ago, and having a happy home, a good husband, and a sweet little daughter, it was not an easy matter for her to be reconciled to the thought that she was to leave all that was near and dear to her on earth. But faith conquered, and she told me repeatedly, "I am perfectly satisfied to depart. The will of the Lord be done." Though she had a good home on earth, she knew she was going to a better home in heaven. And though she suffered much misery in her last days, she prayed to Jesus to release her

speedily, and she found comfort and strength in His Word. The last word which I read to her, on Sunday afternoon but a few hours before her death, was the text just read to you,

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM.

From this pearl of Psalms, read to the dear departed in her dying hours, let us now draw comfort, instruction, and admonition.

The Psalm begins: "The Lord is my Shepherd." Not every one can say this. There are those who are not of Jesus' fold, who do not believe in Him, who do not accept Him as their Savior and Redeemer. They are the unbelievers and the self-righteous. They want no shepherd, no leader and guide. They are like sheep going astray. By nature all men are like this, for it is written: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." And yet there are some who have a shepherd, and say: "The Lord is my Shepherd."

David, the writer of our text, was one of these. He knew how weak, defenseless, and sinful he was by nature, and how sorely he needed a shepherd, a helper and redeemer. He had experienced the love and mercy of God. He had been called into the fold. He had been fed with food celestial. He had been protected by power divine. In sweet assurance of faith he therefore cried out: "The Lord is my Shepherd." If He be a Shepherd to no one else, He is a Shepherd to *me;* He cares for *me,* watches over *me,* preserves *me.* Thus every christian, every one who repents of his sins and believes in Jesus Christ, can and will say.

Also the departed could say, "The Lord is my Shepherd." In infancy already the Good Shepherd placed her

under His pastoral care. He called her into His fold by having her baptized in His name. He had her instructed in His Word. He had her educated in a Christian school. He had her confirmed in His Church. He knew her as His own. She was a sheep of His pasture. Well could she therefore say, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

And what a sweet comfort this is to you who mourn her death, to know that the Lord, the Almighty, was her Shepherd. For since Jesus was her Shepherd, His word has come to pass concerning her: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."

The Psalm continues: "I shall not want" These words are a sort of inference from the first statement—they are sententious and positive. David, knowing that the Lord was his Shepherd, knew also that his Shepherd was able to supply all his needs. He who has Jesus for his Shepherd lacks no good thing. Jesus once asked His disciples, "Lacked ye anything?" and they replied, "Nothing." The Good Shepherd always provides for His sheep. Hence he whose Shepherd is the Lord can say, "I shall not want."

Also the departed could say, "I shall not want." The Lord did not let her lack temporal things. He who feeds the fowls of the air and clothes the lilies of the field also provided for her. She suffered no want. And the Lord also provided her with spiritual things. He gave her His Word and Sacrament. She possessed the means of grace pure and unadulterated. She had the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. She partook of the Sacrament, which is a pledge of the remission of sins. She was

clothed in Jesus' righteousness. Ah, indeed, she could well say, "I shall not want."

What a sweet comfort to know that she had everything that she needed for body and soul, for time and eternity!

The Psalmist continues: "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures." This is a beautiful picture of peace and rest. The Psalmist would say: "Though I am weary and worn, exhausted in body and mind, the Lord grants me sweet repose." The green pastures in which the Lord makes His sheep to lie down are the Scriptures. They impart to the christian peace of conscience and tranquility of mind, for they tell him that all his sins are blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ, that the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

Also the departed the Lord made to lie down in these green pastures of His blessed Word. When doubts or fears assailed her, this Word imparted to her the peace of God which passeth all understanding. It gave her conscience rest, and it told her of the rest that remains to the people of God, the heavenly rest into which she should enter.

The Psalmist says: "He leadeth me beside the still waters." The Psalmist would say: "If I were left to myself I would surely go astray, but thanks be to God, my Good Shepherd leadeth me. He leadeth me to the still waters, to the place where I shall be quickened and refreshed. I could not go there myself; I was weak and feeble, and did not know the way; I needed His guidance, and He did guide me, guide me to the place where I was cleansed and cheered and strengthened."

Also the departed could say: "He leadeth me beside

the still waters." Jesus led her in her infancy to the still and quiet waters of Holy Baptism. There did He cleanse her from all sin and unrighteousness, there did He adopt her as His own, there did He make a covenant with her which stands forever. Baptism being "a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost," it was a great comfort to her that she was a baptized christian, for "as many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." The Lord led her to the still waters, to the place of refreshment, when He brought her to Holy Baptism; and what He there, in Baptism, promised her He has now given her, for now He has taken His child home, now He has led her to the place of eternal refreshment, to the living waters of everlasting life.—What a sweet comfort for you who mourn her death!

"He restoreth my soul." When the Psalmist's soul was sinful, the Lord cleansed it; when it was weak, the Lord strengthened it; when it was sorrowful, the Lord restored it, *i. e.*, revived it. The Lord did that. No man could restore the soul. Soul-sorrow can be banished only by the Lord. And He does this through His Word.

He restored the soul of the departed. True, His Law did not restore her soul, for His Law told her that she was a transgressor, a sinner like all men, and, therefore, under the wrath of God. But while pining away under the blows of the divine Law, the Gospel restored her soul. When, for instance, she thought that the Lord had forgotten her because of her great misery and she was told that the Lord says in His Word: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," her soul was revived. When worry filled her soul concerning the loved ones she was about to leave behind and

she was told that He who had helped them hitherto would help them also in the future, her soul was comforted. When praying and longing to be taken hence and her soul was troubled because her prayer was not answered at once, the Lord restored her soul by His Word in which He told her: "Mine hour is not yet come, but my grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." And when, during the night before her death, her soul was afflicted and she asked her husband to read a prayer to her, her soul was again revived and refreshed.

Dear friend, is your soul restored? restored to life, to hope, to faith, and enjoyment of God, and His Word? If not, remember, God will restore your soul, but He will do so only through His Word. Hence, would you be sure that you are a true Christian, a child of God, an heir of heaven, that you will not perish, but be saved when you die—hear and heed the Word!

The Psalmist continues: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." He would say: The Lord kept me in the pure doctrine, so that I know what is right and what is wrong, and having shown me the paths of righteousness He also leads me in them. And this He did, not because I was better than others, but "for His name's sake," *i. e.,* because of His grace and mercy.

Also the departed could say: "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." She was a christian and led a christian life, and though she was not perfect—no more than we are—she was sorry for her sins and asked God to forgive them, and He forgave them and led her, led her in the paths of piety and virtue, and covered her imperfections and shortcomings with the robe of Jesus' righteousness.

Do you, dear friend, walk in the paths of righteousness, or do you live as the world does? Do you use God's Word and Sacrament, or do you neglect these means of grace? Do you lead a pious, godly life, or are you conformed to this world? Remember, God leads only in the paths of righteousness, and if you are not walking in those paths, then you are not led by God, but by Satan. Turn, then, turn, then, and let the Lord lead you, lead you in the paths of righteousness *now* and in the paths of eternal righteousness *hereafter*.

The Psalmist says: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." The Psalmist knew that a time was coming when he would have to die, but he did not fear death. He knew that the Lord of death was with him, and that therefore he should not enter death, but only its shadow, yea, that he should walk *through* the valley of that death. Who does not see expressed here the glorious hope of the resurrection?

Also the departed did not fear to die. She knew that Jesus, her Good Shepherd, had abolished death and had brought life and immortality to light. She knew that Jesus was with her even in that last and trying hour. And when her weary soul was about to wing its flight heavenward, the last sigh, the last words that she lisped were: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!" Thus she fell asleep.

Asleep in Jesus! blessed sleep!
From which none ever wakes to weep;
A calm and undisturbed repose,
Unbroken by the last of foes.

Her soul has now walked through the valley of the shadow of death and entered the realms of light, and her body will be laid to rest in God's acre to await the summons from on high on the great resurrection day.

What a sweet comfort to know that she was prepared to die, and died saved. Can you also, dear friend, say: "Though *I* walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou are with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me"? If not, repent and believe the Gospel, for you know not when you may be called hence. Who would have thought that the departed, so young and strong, would have been called hence in the prime of life? Therefore "watch and pray, for you know not what hour your Lord doth come."

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." The Psalmist had his enemies. He would not have been like his Lord if he had not. If Christians had no enemies, they might have to fear that they were not the friends of God, for the "friendship of the world is enmity with God." But in spite of his enemies, God granted the Psalmist quietude and serenity. He prepared a table before him, so that he could sit down and eat as if he were in perfect peace.

Even so did the Lord prepare a table before the departed in the presence of unseen enemies, the table on which was celebrated the Holy Supper. Having humbly confessed her sins and her faith, she received the body and blood of the Savior. Thereby the redemption of Christ was sealed to her, and she received strength for her last struggle, the battle of life and death.

This table, this Sacrament, the Lord has prepared also

for you, dear friend. Do you approach it? or do you neglect and despise it? O let not the Lord prepare it for you in vain. You deprive yourself of a great blessing and call down upon yourself God's wrath.

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Kings and priests were anointed with oil. Christians are anointed with the Holy Ghost. Christians, too, are kings and priests, for John writes: "Christ loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father."

Also the departed was anointed with the Holy Ghost who in Baptism was shed on her abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior. And now she stands, arrayed in royal and priestly robes, before the throne of God forever; for the Psalm closes:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The Psalmist dwelt in the house of God on earth, he attended divine services; but there above he dwells in the temple not made with hands.

Even so the departed was a member of Christ's Church and attended divine services, but now dwells in the house of the Lord forever. O happy, blessed lot!

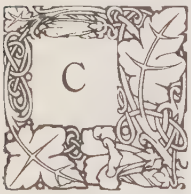
Would you not like to share it, dear hearer? O then make diligent use of the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. Repent daily of your sins, believe in Jesus Christ, and form the good and earnest purpose with the assistance of God the Holy Ghost henceforth to amend your sinful life. Thus let the Lord be your Shepherd, and then you shall not want in body and soul, in time and eternity. God grant it to us all for Jesus' sake. Amen.

IX.

THE MASTER IS COME.

BY THE REV. EDWARD NELANDER, PH. D., LOS ANGELES, CAL.

"And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, The Master is come and calleth for thee."—*John 11: 28.*



HARMING and sequestered lies Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. In the cottage of Martha and Mary and their brother, Lazarus, Jesus found a home in the last weeks of His life, apparently the sweetest home He ever had during His life on earth.

A great sorrow fell upon this household, while Jesus was in retirement at Perea. It is all told in the simple, touching message sent to Jesus by the sisters: "He whom Thou lovest is sick." The messenger returns—alone.

Lazarus grows daily worse and at last it is whispered about in Bethany that Lazarus is dead. Four days of mourning pass, when at length, but alas! too late, they hear of the approach of Jesus.

Martha meets Him first with the words, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here my brother had not died." Finally she hastens to the house to say to Mary, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." *"The Master is come,"* may be

said with equal truth today. May the Holy Spirit guide our meditation that we may be edified and comforted!

1. *The Master is come that we may sit at His feet and learn of Him.*

The word "Master" might be translated "Teacher." At the feet of this authoritative Teacher Mary had often sat in former happy days when no great sorrows afflicted her. A knowledge is now to be imparted that can only be learned in the closest fellowship with God.

To bring us to such secret communion with Himself, we are often laid on a bed of sickness or called to stand at the grave of a loved one. When the great Teacher is near we are taught the lesson of submission. After a while we learn to say, "Thy will be done."

A gardener, it is said, preserved with great care a very choice rose. One morning he grieved to find it gone. Some one said, "I saw the Master take the rose." "Oh, then," said he, "I am content." You, mourning one, have lost a dear one. It was the Master who took your flower. It belonged to Him. He is come to teach you by the firelight shed from the furnace of affliction. Blessed is he to whom the Master opens the promises and teaches to say, "Our Father, who art in Heaven, Thy will be done."

2. *The Master is come to give divine consolation.*

Mary of Bethany was not without sympathizing friends, but all the Jerusalem comforters and sympathizers could not wake her from her trance of sorrow. But when Martha's brief word reaches her ear—"The Master is come!"—she rushes with fleet step—"quickly"—carrying

her grief to the Great Restorer. "Jesus wept," comforting by His weeping more than by His words. Mary understood that the tender love of Jesus was expressing itself in tears. Dear weeping ones, while you do not undervalue the sympathies of friends, you need, most of all, the companionship of Jesus Himself. Behold, "The Master is come!" He is here in His Spirit, the Comforter, and in His blessed promises. "The Master is come." Lean on His almighty arm, listen to His voice, and feel the beating of His loving heart. "The Master is come"; go to Him in your bereavement. Mary did not know in what form consolation would be administered, but she had confidence, as you may have, that He doeth all things well and will ultimately wipe all tears from your eyes.

3. *The Master is come to manifest His power.*

The friends of Martha and Mary could only sympathize with the bereaved sisters. They could go with them to the grave and weep, but their lamentation could not stir the dull ear of death. But there was One who could do more. As a man Jesus mingled his tears in genuine sympathy with the sorrowing sisters, but as a God He said, "Lazarus, come forth!"

Though for us He does not yet restore our dead, nor at once bring back the radiant joy as He did at Bethany, yet He takes away all that is terrible from death and teaches us to regard the departed not as dead, but as living. He points to His own empty tomb and recalls His promises of that hour when at His word the dead "shall be raised incorruptible." He will not at present awaken our dead. That mighty act is reserved for the future. But the raising of

Lazarus and others, and particularly his own resurrection, is our warrant that He will assuredly awake all the dead in the last day.

4. *"The Master is come," is a summons that will soon come to each one of us.*

There is nothing so certain in human affairs as the fact of death. It is the one event that happens to all. "Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Death is to every one a coming of Christ to judgment. "Prepare to meet your God!" need not be a dread summons. To the loving bride the announcement that the bridegroom has arrived should be joyful tidings. To those who have truly repented and believed death is only an incident on the journey home. When Frances Willard breathed out her life in the words, "It will be so beautiful to be with God," we can easily see where she was going. There was but one place in the universe for her; that place was with the Master who was calling. To faith death is not a gruesome skeleton with a scythe, but a nurse who hushes the tired pilgrim to sleep. To faith death is the radiant angel who opens the door and announces, "The Master is come!"

X.

"TO DIE IS GAIN."

On the Death of a Woman.

BY THE REV. R. B. PEERY, PH. D., ATCHISON, KAN.

"For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."—*Phil. 1: 21.*

OW strange these words sound! How contradictory to our natural feelings! We think of death as the King of Terrors, and shrink back from him in horror. As Bryant says:

"Thoughts of the last bitter hour come like a blight
Over our spirits, and sad images
Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,
The breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make us to shudder, and grow sick at heart."

As we stand by the bedside of loved ones, and see the icy hand of death creeping over them, an overwhelming sense of helpless sympathy and infinite loss bows us down, as we bitterly repeat Lord Byron's thought:

"O God, it is a fearful thing
To see a human soul take wing,
In any shape, in any mood."

But Paul says that death is gain, and he must have felt it would be such in his own case when he wrote to the Philippians, "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

How are we to understand these words? In what sense can we say that death is gain?

I. *To die is gain because it brings rest.*

This world offers no rest to us. Labors, toils, and weariness make up its little day. Agreeable work in moderate quantity is a blessing; but arduous and uninterrupted toil is a curse. Thousands of little children are stunted in body, mind and soul, because they have had no rest and no play. Many men and women are prematurely old and bent with care, because hard conditions have left them no opportunity for rest.

But there remains a Sabbath of Rest for the children of God. At death they enter into that rest. And those who have ached, and toiled, and suffered throughout a long and weary life find that rest sweet and blessed. Our sister has entered upon her everlasting rest. We may say of her:

"Life's work well done,
Life's race well run,
Life's crown well won,
Now comes rest."

II. *To die is gain because death ushers us into a better life.*

There are two significant words used in the New Testament to express death, that reveal the thought of the inspired authors concerning its real nature.

When our blessed Lord was transfigured on the Mount, there appeared to Him the representatives of the law and the prophets, Moses and Elijah, who spake to Him concerning His "exodus," which He was soon to accomplish at Jerusalem. Our English translation "decease" is most unfortunate here. The word that stands on the page of the Greek Testament is "exodus," or outgoing. It harks us back to that time when the children of Israel accomplished their exodus, leaving the Egyptian bondage for the liberty and freedom of Canaan. So was Jesus to have His exodus, out of limitation into larger life; out of trial into triumph; out of grief into glory. There is no thought of sleep or nothingness here, but simply a passing out into a higher and better life.

I think Peter, one of the eye-witnesses of that sublime scene, was much impressed by the word used; for, many years after, when writing of his own death, he described it with the same expression, and this is the Scriptural idea of death, that it is simply an "exodus" into another and always a higher life. Therefore it is gain and not loss, and the dead are to be felicitated, rather than pitied.

The other illuminating word about death in the New Testament is used by Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, concerning his own approaching experience—"after my departure." Departure differs slightly from exodus. The latter means a "going out," while the former means a "loosing from." It is a nautical term. As we hear it we seem to see the great ship lying at the wharf, with cargo all in, passengers aboard, and everything ready for sailing. We hear the sounding of the gong, the hurried departure of many feet, the drawing in of the gang-plank, and the

low whistle, as this mighty steamer slowly rolls seaward. Lying there at the dock, she is an ungainly thing; but out on the great deep she is beautiful as a bird, for she was not made for the narrow harbor, but for the open sea. Departure means to her a going away from shallowness and narrowness and danger, into depth and width and security. It means a return to her native element, for which she was built.

And this is what death appeared to Paul—a loosing from limitations and dangers, and putting out to the open sea, for which his soul was created. And what a beautiful and true conception it is! Bret Harte has expressed it very sweetly in these lines:

"As I stand by the cross on the lone mountain's crest,
Looking over the ultimate sea,
In the gloom of the mountain a ship lies at rest,
And one sails away from the lea:
One spreads its white wings on a far-reaching track,
With pennant and sheet flowing free:
One hides in the shadow with sails laid aback—
The ship that is waiting for me!

"But lo, in the distance the clouds break away!
The gate's glowing portals I see;
And I hear from the outgoing ship in the bay,
The song of the sailors in glee;
So I think of the luminous footprints that bore
The comfort o'er dark Galilee,
And wait for the signal to go to the shore,
To the ship that is waiting for me."

Our beloved sister has accomplished her exodus; she has made her departure. We lay her body away in the

grave with heavy hearts, but we know that the spirit has taken its flight to its long home. And we can look up now through our tears and say, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit; for they rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Truly, to die is gain, if it brings rest from toil and trouble, and ushers us at once into a higher and better life!

I have frequently heard it said that human life goes out as a candle does. The evening zephers blow in at the open window, the light is snuffed out, and you are left in darkness. So, they tell us, ends the life. But this is a poor figure. No human life was ever snuffed out as a candle is.

Let me give you a far truer and more pleasing symbol. Stand on one of our beautiful Colorado hills at eventide, and watch the setting sun as he draws near the horizon. If the conditions of cloud and atmosphere are just right you will see a painting sufficient to excite the envy of any artist. The clouds are tipped as by fire; all the colors of the rainbow are lavishly displayed in the firmament. The whole evening sky is transformed into a superb picture. The sinking sun slowly upgathers his spent shafts of light, and puts them back into his golden quiver again, as he gently kisses the gorgeous horizon, and slowly vanishes from our view, leaving a mellow radiance and soft afterglow in the evening heavens. Has the sun gone out? No, he has just withdrawn from us a little while, as he continues to shine elsewhere.

Even so, the life that has been lived aright approaches its end in glory and splendor, leaving a fragrant afterglow of kindly words and deeds, while it goes on to shine in the spirit world.

Beloved brethren, in view of the fact that death is but the gateway to the real life, how foolish and shortsighted it is for one to live only for the present, and give no thought to the future! To allow himself to be so absorbed by material things as to have no time for the things of the Spirit! And yet many of you are doing this. You neglect God, His Church, and His Son, our only Savior. You live in the very presence of death, and make no effort to prepare for it. Were you to go on a short journey of a week or a month you would get ready; but you dare to set out on this untried journey, from which there is no return, without any preparation whatever.

May God help you to resist the blandishments of this world, and live for the higher and better things of the Spirit! "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but rather lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through, nor steal!"

XI.

THE LIMIT AND THE REACH OF LIFE.

On the Death of a Man.

BY THE REV. R. B. PEERY, PH. D., ATCHISON, KAN.

"Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am."—*Ps. 39: 4.*

CCASIONS like this remind us very forcibly of the brevity and uncertainty of life. The majority of people born into this world die in infancy. And if one be fortunate enough to survive the plagues and afflictions incident to childhood and youth, growing up to manhood and living out his full span of life, it is at best but three-score short years and ten, when he dies and is forgotten. Truly life is but the shadow of a cloud, the dream of a sleeper.

Not only is it short, for most of us life is troubled. It is made up of toils and hardships, of disappointments and trials, of griefs and sorrows. "Never morning wore to evening but some heart did break."

When we remember these things it almost seems as though life were not worth the living. Indeed, if this were all there is to life it were not worth while. If man were born but to live out his brief, troubled day, in sorrow and

tears, and then lay him down and die and make an end of it, better were it for that man if he had not been born.

But we are persuaded that this brief span is not the whole, or even the larger part of life. It is but the gateway to the true and real life, which lies beyond the dark river of death. Life is indivisible and indestructible. It survives this change that we call death, and flows unbroken into the eternal future. The spirit does not die with the body, as the music dies when the harp is broken. Rather is it released from its prison-house of clay, to soar away into its native element.

We find in nature much to encourage us in a belief in immortality. Led by this light alone, Socrates looked forward to another life. Dying, he said, "I think I see the Isles of the Blessed, but oh, that we had a stouter vessel!" The universal belief in some form of immortality is an instinct planted in the human heart by the Creator Himself, and cannot be mistaken. He guides us, and the birds; and we may safely follow His leadership. The very facilities and capacities with which we are endowed are promises of a higher and better life than this.

What would you think of an architect who should lay out most beautiful grounds, planting splendid lawns, shrubbery and trees, with fine walks and driveways, leading up to a pretentious portico, with marble steps and Grecian columns and arches, and a great bronze door, promising entrance to a magnificent mansion or palace; and, when you should drive in those grounds, admire the lawns and flowers, climb those glistening steps, and stand before that great door, with keen anticipation of the splendor that must lie behind all this preliminary grandeur, it should

slowly swing open, and reveal to you—*a blank wall?* Would you not say, "How foolish was this architect, to spend all his money on the grounds and entrance, and build no house beyond!" And shall the great Architect of our souls be more foolish than an earthly builder? Shall He create us with faculties and capacities capable of infinite growth and development, giving promise of a suitable and permanent field for their exercise, only to disappoint them, and cut them all off by the blank wall of death? No! a thousand times No! A just God could not do that. He must fulfill the promises that are wrapt up in our nature, and satisfy the instinct He Himself has given us.

> "My own dim life should teach me this,
> That life shall live forevermore;
> Else earth were darkness at the core,
> And dust and ashes all that is."

If nature allows us to hope for immortality, revelation assures us that we will realize it. Long ago the patient prophet Job asked the question, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Through the centuries sages and poets have been searching for the answer; but while they have found many intimations and suggestions, they have been able to point to no positive proof to which a man could pin his faith. Jesus, alone, gives us the sufficient and satisfactory answer to Job's question. He says, "Yes, because I live ye shall live also. I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." Here we rest our faith. Trusting in Christ we know that we shall survive this change called death, and live forever in a better world.

We refuse to think of death as an end, or even an unconscious sleep. It is simply a change, a transformation in an endless existence. Often have I stood on the steamer's deck as she wound her tortuous way through the beautiful Inland Sea of Japan. 'Round about us everywhere islands, large and small, were scattered pell-mell, as though strewn by some mighty giant's hand. Here and there the charming green coats would come down quite close together; and sometimes right in between them would rise a rocky islet, appearing to shut off entirely the passageway. Timid travelers would begin to fear lest there might be a collision; but the pilot, nothing daunted, kept driving the great ship straight toward the bosom of the mountain. Suddenly there was a grating of the keel, and a response of the vessel like a live thing, as she quickly rounded a sharp point; when lo! the bewitching expanse of island-dotted water opened out in the distance more charming than before.

This, my friends, is a picture of death. Looked at from our side, it seems to be an end of life. We cannot see through or beyond it. Yet I am assured that when we approach we will discover that it is but the rounding of a point, and that the way is still open beyond.

"There is no death; what seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath,
Is but the suburb to the life Elysian,
Whose portal we call Death."

Do not think, then, of your departed friend as having ceased to be, or even of having fallen into an unconscious sleep. Rather think of him as "having left his outworn

shell by life's unresting sea, while he has gone on to dwell in the more stately mansions." His body returns to the earth, but his spirit has gone back to God who gave it. In His hands all our loved ones are safe, and we confidently commit them to His keeping. Looking into the dear face of our departed friend today, we would say in this faith:

"Thy day has come, not gone;
Thy sun has risen, not set;
Thy life is now beyond
The reach of death or change,—
Not ended, but begun.
O noble soul! O gentle heart!
Hail, and farewell."

These services are more for the living than for the dead. Our friend has passed beyond the reach or the need of our aid; but we are still here in the world, with our lives to live, our battles to fight, our victories to win; and the lessons of the hour are for us. What are they?

I never stand by an open casket and gaze upon a dead face without seeming to see the still lips move, and to hear a voice saying, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not your summons may come."

Now, who is the man that is ready for this inevitable experience we call death. Surely not he who is relying on his own good deeds and merit to save him; for when we lay our characters alongside that of the pure and spotless Christ our righteousness is seen to be but filthy rags before Him. No, the man who is ready for this experience is not the one who is trusting in himself, but that one who is

trusting in his Savior. It is he whose life is hid with Christ in God; who has already linked himself with Divinity by faith, so that he is here and now a partaker of the divine life.

God give us all such faith, that we may be able to triumph over death, and live forever with Him in Glory!

XII.

THE SURE REMEDY AGAINST DEATH.

On the Death of a Pastor.

BY REV. S. SCHILLINGER, A. M., WEST ALEXANDER, O.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"—*John 11: 25, 26.*

HRISTIAN Friends, Sorrowing Parents, Brothers and Sisters: It is not necessary to tell you why we are here today. Death, the mighty reaper, has gathered in another sheaf. Another weary pilgrim has reached his journey's end. His was a short race, but we believe, well run; so short that, no doubt, many an one, in profound silence, inquires: Why must it be thus? Why must his life of usefulness so soon be cut off? The Lord answers this question, when He tells us that His thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. Isa. 55: 8. The Lord would impress all the more upon our hearts the established truth that His work is not dependent upon our thoughts and efforts, though He has seen fit, in His mercy, to use us as instruments. In His own chosen time, He makes no distinction between Jew or

Greek, Samaritan or Pharisee, rich or poor, friend or foe, high or low, young or old. He offers the same grace and mercy to all, but He wants no one to dictate to Him when, and when not, to end our journeys here below. There is no comfort in trying to fathom God's mysterious ways. There is comfort, however, in this hour of affliction, in contemplating God's great and unspeakable mercy. He has done everything that all might be brought to a knowledge of the truth, believe in Jesus Christ, and be saved; therefore He says: "He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." These words are for everybody. They are for you, sorrowing family. They would breathe comfort into your hearts in this hour of affliction. They would remind you that since he whose dispensation causes your hearts to be sad today, was a believer in Christ while sojourning here below, therefore he is not dead, but simply asleep, and shall rise again to a new life. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Do you believe this, sorrowing parents and children? These words contain a sweet comfort. From them you can conclude that your son and brother is not dead, but alive. The words of Jesus are the truth and nothing but the truth. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." What does this teach us? That he who perseveres in faith in Christ to the end shall never see death; that is, eternal death. Of this death the Savior speaks in our text. May the Lord comfort you in this sad dispensation, while we consider by His grace.

I. *Its prescription, and*
II. *Its application.*

Not only the efficiency, but also your confidence in a prescription depends largely upon him who writes it. If an ignorant, incompetent physician writes a prescription you have no confidence in it, and you decline to apply the remedy he prescribes. In the remedy prescribed against eternal death we can have unreserved confidence, because He who wrote the prescription is none other than the Holy Spirit Himself, the Almighty God, and all-wise Jehovah, in Whom lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. What He has written is infallibly sure. There can be no doubt about the validity of this prescription, because He who wrote it is an infallible and perfectly holy Being. He can only speak the truth, and what the truth prescribes cannot deceive us.

This truth we find partly in the Old Testament; it is the basis of the divine prescription; and partly in the New Testament; it is the fulfillment of the Old. The two Testaments constitute the entire prescription.

Now, in the Old Testament we have Christ predicted, and in the New we see Him as having come. We can say, therefore, that the prescription against eternal death was written by the Holy Spirit and filled by the Lord Jesus, the only Begotten of the Father from all eternity. He filled this infallible prescription partly through His perfect fulfillment of the divine law. You are aware that, since the first transgression, sin came into the world, and on account of sin we have been rendered so helpless that we cannot fulfill

one single precept of the divine law. A perfect fulfillment, however, is required or death, eternal death must follow. The fact that we have been rendered unable to fulfill the law does not abrogate it. It stands against us, and fulfilled it must be. There is One, however, who can, and who has fulfilled it for us, and He is Jesus Christ. We are, therefore, no longer under the condemnation of the law, for Christ became our substitute.

His fulfillment of the divine law is a part of the very nature and essence of this grand remedy against death. That is one of our great comforts and consolations under every relation of life, particularly in time of affliction, and when temporal death stares us in the face. We are sure that just as certain as Moses led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, Jesus Christ has led us from beneath the curse of the law. But this is not the extent of our comfort and consolation. The prescription would be incomplete if it showed us only Christ's fulfillment of the divine law. More is necessary to make the remedy completely and absolutely effectual. The very evil which rendered us unable to fulfill the divine law made of us transgressors. Sin, that awful sin, which came into the world through the first disobedience, is a transgression of the divine law, and the wages of sin, saith the Scripture, is death, temporal and eternal death. Now, if we would have an absolute remedy against eternal death, it must take away the guilt of our transgressions. In order that this might be accomplished and the prescription completely filled, Christ suffered and died upon the cross. His sufferings and death also belong to the essence of this grand remedy. They are the greater part of it. Without the shedding of the blood of the Lamb

of God there can be no forgiveness of sin. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, cleanses from all sin. If the circumstance of Christ's suffering and death were not added to this remedy we would have little comfort in the hour of sorrow and affliction. There is some comfort in knowing that Christ fulfilled the law for us, but that does not yet pay the debt of our sin. We must not only have a perfect fulfillment of the law, but a perfect cancelling of our insolvent debts.

When we study the prescription in the Old Testament carefully we learn that the very work Christ accomplished upon the cross was there prefigured and foretold. The bite of the fiery serpents in the wilderness indicates the awful bite of sin. The elevation of the brazen serpent upon the pole, which healed all who looked upon it, is a type of the Savior's crucifixion. This what the Savior Himself says: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up." Jno. 3: 14. The healing power which God put into the brazen serpent upon that pole prefigures the healing of Christ's suffering upon the cross, from all sin. Through this great work Christ overcame the power of death; through this work the head of our enemy was crushed; through this work He rendered temporal death but a sleep; a transition from this vale of tears to a home beyond the dark river of death, a house not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens. Upon this great work the Savior bases His comforting words in our text, to Martha. He knew whereof He was speaking, for He knew what He came into this world to accomplish. His words impart the same comfort to your weeping hearts today, because they mean the same

for you. This work is the only basis of all comfort. Outside of the merits of Jesus Christ there is no comfort in the hour of affliction, or of the soul's distress on account of sin. Without the merits of Christ funeral sermons and all other sermons would be meaningless babbling. Without His work we might as well bury our dead as we bury the brute. Thanks be to God, however! We are under different relations. We know whereof we speak, for we know that our Redeemer lives, and according to His promise we shall live also. But there is another truth of particular comfort in the words of our text, and to this the Savior especially directs Martha's attention: "I am the resurrection and the life." His work of redemption would be of little value, and the remedy of no benefit to us if the seal were not put upon it. His resurrection from the dead is the seal. Paul says that if Christ be not risen our faith is vain. 1 Cor. 15: 14. This is the very climax of our great comfort, that Christ came forth victorious from the grave. He entered death for us, passed through death, conquered it, led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. Eph. 4: 8. Since Christ came forth victorious from death and the grave, they have no terrors for the christian. He is not afraid of death, nor does he dread the grave. Christ has rendered it but a chamber of sweet sleep. Is this not a sweet comfort? Is it not worth the while to examine carefully this wonderful prescription and its wonderful remedies, when they accomplish such wonderful work? Can we afford in this short life, to forfeit the wonderful healing the remedies here prescribed produce?

But this prescription possesses a few characteristics we must not forget. It is a sure prescription and its reme-

dies are absolutely certain. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy: whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." It can never disappoint us in health or in sickness, in prosperity or in adversity, in joy or in sorrow, because it is a sure remedy. This is an unspeakable comfort in this hour of sadness. A sure word, i. e., it cannot deceive us. Deception is foreign to its very nature; it is absolutely excluded from its very essence. Truth and certainty are written upon the face of this prescription, and every trace of doubt, error and falsehood forever denounced. "The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Ps. 19: 7. "Thy testimonies are very sure." Ps. 93: 5. Again the Prophet says to our comfort and encouragement: "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. 55: 3. I might augment passages proving the absolute certainty of this prescription, but let these suffice. Another characteristic is that it is absolutely infallible. It can make no mistake. If the author be infallible the prescription must be infallible. On account of this characteristic we can put our unreserved trust in it. It will never fail to accomplish its important work. What it says it will do, that it will infallibly accomplish.

It is, furthermore, absolutely curative. If its remedies are applied it will never fail. "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." Never to die means forever to be cured. Is it not a great comfort to know that we shall be forever cured from the awful malady of sin, and that we believe our beloved brother is now in that happy relation? Another characteristic of this wonderful prescrip-

tion is that its intention is universal. Its remedies are intended for everybody. None is excluded. The Lord takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked. He wants all to turn from their evil ways, use the remedy and live. God so loved the world, the whole world, that He gave His only begotten Son to make all people forever blessed. Jno. 3: 16. All people can be healed from their terrible malady if they only apply the remedy. This brings us to the next thought:

II. *Its application.*

In order to apply this wonderful remedy and its wonderful healing powers we must learn of it. We must know it and we must believe it beyond the least shadow of a doubt. To learn to know this remedy means to search the Scriptures. The more we search them the more we acquaint ourselves with this wonderful remedy, and the greater and richer will be our personal comfort. Here a thought suggests itself which is a comfort for you, sorrowing family, in this time of affliction. Your departed son and brother searched the Scriptures. This grand remedy for his sin-sick soul, we believe, was his heart's delight. He spent years, his strength and means to equip himself thoroughly to be able to apply this wonderful remedy to his fellow men. The brief time the Lord allotted him was spent in its faithful application. This is a sweet satisfaction in the present sorrow and affliction.

Another way to apply the remedy is to hear the Word, the soul-saving Gospel of Jesus Christ, preached, and to make use of the sacraments. I do not say that one absolutely cannot learn enough of this remedy by searching the Scriptures, to be saved; but if anyone searches the Scrip-

tures rightly he will readily learn that it is necessary also to go to church, hear the Word preached, receive the sacraments and identify himself with the christian congregation. All this our departed brother realized and did, not only for himself individually, but was engaged in administering the means of grace publicly, that the souls of others might be brought into the christian congregation and be satisfied with the saving preaching of the Gospel. It is no small comfort for you that your son and brother was engaged in this glorious work.

It is not enough, however, simply to search the Scriptures and to hear the preaching of the Word; in order effectually to apply the remedy we must believe it. Faith is the God-given mouth by which this remedy is received, and it is the faculty also by which it is absorbed. Faith is absolutely necessary to salvation. There is no possibility of applying this remedy salutarily without faith. Much stress must be laid upon faith. Only then do we lay too much stress upon faith when we elevate it above the merits of Christ, which is the remedy itself. It is just as impossible to be saved without faith as without the merits of Christ. The one is absolutely necessary to merit salvation for us, and the other is absolutely necessary to appropriate the merited salvation. Faith must, therefore, be emphasized. If we would rightly derive the real benefit from this divine remedy we ought to understand the nature of faith as taught in the Word of God. The first characteristic of faith is knowledge. We must know that there is a Christ, and after we have learned this truth, we must give assent to it, i. e., believe that it is an actual fact. We dare not have any doubt about it. But this is not enough yet. This

is simply an historical faith, and there is no real comfort in that kind of faith. The Bible says, the devils believe and tremble, but they are irredeemable spirits. In the hour of sorrow, affliction and death we must have something more than an historical faith. There is still another characteristic necessary to make it a complete and saving faith. It is confidence, the sweetest of all its qualities. But what does that mean? It means that the Savior must be made our personal Savior. Each individual must believe for himself, and within himself, that Jesus Christ is his Savior. You! You!! Each one of you must believe that Christ came into the world, fulfilled the law, suffered and died for your sins; and I must believe this all-important truth for myself. That is confidence. Each one must believe that this remedy is intended for him, and that he has no ill it cannot cure.

This is the comfort the Savior applies to Martha in the words of our text, in order to awaken in her that saving faith in Him, as the resurrection and the life. Just as certain as these words speak the truth, so certain shall he who believes them ever live and never die. That we now see our beloved young brother here in the icy grasp of death is no proof against this truth, nor does it destroy these words. The Savior is not speaking here of temporal death which we are now witnessing, but of eternal death. It is true that we must all pass through temporal death. This is the curse which sin brought into the world. God said to Adam when he transgressed: "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Gen. 3: 19. If we did not have to pass through temporal death the Scriptures would not be fulfilled. But eternal death shall never harm those who fall asleep in Jesus. This is what the true christian will realize forever.

Eternal death is that awful death in which the wicked are constantly suffering and dying and yet never dead; but the christian has no fear of this death because Christ is his resurrection and his life. If we look to Jesus and His merits we apply the divine remedy, and we shall be comforted in the hour of affliction and temporal death. This is your comfort now, sorrowing family and friends. Don't think that you have raised a son to no purpose, and that your plans and intentions have all been thwarted. It is not the case. You raised a son for the Lord, and no greater work can be performed by man in this world through the help of God. Without God's help and that faith which He has given you, you could not have done for him what you did. God will also reward His faithful servants for what they do for His kingdom in this world, but it is a reward of grace apprehended by faith. What did Jesus do for Martha? He said "thy brother shall rise again." So shall your son and brother rise again; and we all, if we remain faithful unto death, shall rise again unto a new life. When Jesus told them to take away the stone which confined Lazarus in his grave, Martha would have interfered; but Jesus said unto her, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" She saw it. So shall you see the glory of God, though your hearts are now sad and heavy. Only believe as the Word teaches, and your sadness shall be turned into joy, and that joy shall no man take from you. May God give you strength to continue in faith to the end, and your souls shall be forever blessed! Amen.

XIII.

"DEATH AS A FRIEND."

BY THE REV. FRED. V. CHRIST, NEW YORK CITY.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—*Phil. 1: 21.*

HE transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the thing which continues to puzzle the critics and assure his disciples. The testimony of the cured man may be questioned and labeled as false, but for the man himself all adverse argument is of no force because he has within his heart and consciousness the marks of the Master. This power of Christ to change the aspect of things and persons is seen in the fact that He has taken the worst enemy of man and turned it into his best friend. Death the monster, which stands like a huge nightmare of destruction before the natural godless man, is changed by Christ's righteousness into the cradle kiss of a heavenly Father. The only condition is that we may say truthfully as the great apostle did: "For me to live is Christ," and then the conclusion is plain. "To die is gain."

To live is Christ—means that we must identify ourselves with Him in at least two great points. These two stand out in His life and are always present in any picture of His life or career. He was humble and He was a man

of sorrows and He was each of them because of the one thing—sin. We have then two mysterious characters necessary to introduce us to *friend* Death—Humility and Sorrow.

In this same Book of Philippians, the Apostle Paul says: "Let this same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," and proceeds to show that though Jesus was equal with God, yet He humbled Himself, made Himself of no reputation. And all because He saw a world lost in sin. To live in Christ then is to have the same mind of humility in order to break up the old pride in our hearts. For that pride is the dam of sin which prevents us from letting go of our sin and also dams out the great floods of God's mercy and light. It is only so that we can enter into the mind of Christ and understand His awful struggle with the prince of darkness. Only then can we learn the price paid for iniquity and understand what a friend we have in Jesus, all our griefs and sins to bear. Only then do we learn of our own awful guilt and finally know the reason of that word—to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. We enter sympathetically into His humility but we must also fully recognize our own weakness and our own sin and so cast ourselves without restraint or fear on Him.

Stand if you will before this Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages. Look steadily at Him as He towers above you. Think of *your* sins and *His* holiness. Think of *your* weakness and of *His* strength. Think of *your* selfishness and *His* love. Think of *His* humility and *your* pride. Think how faithful *He* was to God and how faithless *you* are. And it will make you very humble indeed if you look at Him rightly.

"Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at wisdom
laid bare,
Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank to the in-
finite care!
Do I task any faculty highest to image success?
I but open my eyes—and perfection no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined full fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul, in the clod.
And thus looking within and around me I ever renew.
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises
it too.)
The submission of man's nothing—perfect to God's all—
complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit—I climb to His feet."

The mystery of the incarnation as it shows humility and teaches it, is but the fringe of the garment. Life becomes ours and death is transformed into beauty and peace —only when there is a real sorrow for sin. We must learn to understand the Man of Sorrows—and the mystery of sorrow.

Reader! what is sorrow? Define it for me. You bandy the word about; you think you have had a sorrow; what is sorrow? Bless you, it is as mysterious as the human heart. Lord Bacon criticized a great philosopher because in his compendium of all science he left out a "History of the human emotions." Shakespeare's works are probably the nearest approach we have to such a history. Yet even they with all their glory of expression are far short of being a complete exhibition of the human heart. Explain to me how it is that one moment your heart is light and free and life so full of joy that you would only describe it by the word ecstasy, and then a few moments afterward be so heavy-hearted that the wet sand weight of

the whole world seemed to be upon you. When in an instant the bright eye becomes dull, the red cheek pale, the erect body bent, then I will explain sorrow. Or think how near sorrow and laughter are, so that when suddenly relieved of a great sorrow or come into great joy we often break out in uncontrollable laughter. No! the human heart is like the sea—mysterious and deep—and sorrow is an unfathomable part of it. You can experience it but never quite fully define it. Yet there are some hints in the Bible which connect it with us and give us a working definition in order to permit us to have that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus. The Apostle tells us of two sorts of sorrow. One brings joy and life, the other brings heaviness and death. The first is a godly sorrow; the second an ungodly sorrow. An ungodly sorrow is born when sin meets the law and feels the tightening of justice. It is a sorrow concerned more especially with consequences in which our sin is ever before us and we feel the impending hand of God. It is a sorrow not because we break a law, but because the law is going to break us.

A godly sorrow is born when sin meets love and becomes aware of mercy. When we know the sorrow which arises in our hearts because we have grieved a loving Father, then we have a godly sorrow beginning in us. It was so with Luther. He met the law many times when a sinner and found no peace, but when by faith, he, the *sinner*, met Christ Jesus, the *Savior*, his godly sorrow became in him a new life.

Now Christ could not have an ungodly sorrow because He was sinless. Nor could He have a godly sorrow in the sense which we mean, for He needed no mercy, having

done no wrong. Christ's sorrow was a sympathetic sorrow for sin. He entered into the life of humanity and so identified Himself with it that He could say truthfully: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me." But we must have His mind—and how? We cannot be sorry for ourselves, that will deny the mind of Christ who thought not of Himself. We cannot be sorry for others for that is but an extension of ourselves. But as Christ identified Himself with us and became a man of sorrows, so we must identify ourselves with Christ and become partakers in a godly sorrow. Put yourself in Christ's place. Think of all He has done to bring us up as His children. Think of His teaching from the beginning, and how we as humanity have denied His love, forsaken His temple, neglected His law. It is all summed up in the Bible under that ugly word, *Adultery*. For as the church is Christ's bride, whenever we go after strange gods we commit that sin in the higher, spiritual sense. And so Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, speaking as God in His place, says:

"Is there any sorrow like mine?"

Is there any sorrow like God's sorrow, who all the years of this world taught, admonished and wept over His people and then sent His only Son to redeem them—all with the result that the Holy Ghost was compelled to write the saddest words in all the world:

"He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

Realize this godly sorrow, which is God's sorrow arising from sin—rebellious, stiff-necked and unconquerable

sin—and you will be realizing a godly sorrow and entering into the mind of Christ. You will be able to say:

"I live: yet not I; Christ liveth in me."

If you humble your heart and learn this deep godly sorrow for sin you will live in Christ and through Him eternally. Under these circumstances death will become a friend. It will be to depart and be with your Friend above every friend, the One who came into you when everyone else went out. The presence and appropriation of the mind of Jesus Christ are the requisites of that true knowledge of Him which brings life under those circumstances described by the apostle as living in Christ. Death loses its evil and becomes a good. To depart becomes gain, bringing rest, sleep and heaven.

What a great, wide tumultuous sea this world is anyway. We are hurled into a world of time and chance out of a world of timelessness and unwilling decree. We go hence into the same world. We come into this one crying, we go out of it crying, and all the while we are here it is a constant hurrying hither and thither in restless commotion. And in all of our hurry we are seeking rest. It is what all the world is seeking. Back of each of our daily occupations and consciously or unconsciously impulsing all of our professional life, in vocation and avocation we are seeking rest. This is the reason that those who have a great deal of worldly wisdom and goods may be with all of their treasures as unhappy as the poorest person in the slums. It is the reason that there is such a wild, selfish rush to get and keep. And if men and women could but understand this, what a difference in their conduct. If

they would but seek that rest first and last which is rest, how much less worry and care and how much happier in the daily task and how calmly they could lie down to sleep and take that last rest if they can but go to rest safe in the arms of Jesus. Like the great and good christian Neander one day said to his wife, "Gretchen, I am tired. I will go to rest," and went to his couch and woke up in glory. So we, if like he did, we live and work in Jesus Christ. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their labors and their works do follow them—in their sleep to recuperate and grow to awake like the Master. "The high ambitions of the world are vain unless the feet with righteousness be shod. There is no gain save it be righteous gain. The soul is restless till it rests in God." Death then for the christian is the gateway to eternal life and the knowledge and enjoyment of Jesus Christ. Certainly it is a great joy to see it swing open and to behold the King in His glory. To die is gain. Robert Browning, in his great poem, "Paracelsus," at the end of Part I in which Paracelsus aspires, writes this:

> "Are there not, Festus, are there not, dear Michael,"
> Two points in the adventure of the diver,
> One—when a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
> One—when a prince, he rises with his pearl?
> Festus, I plunge!"

So my reader, at death the human soul, poised as a diver, then plunges into the ocean of God's love—a beggar in the tattered rags of his own unrighteousness when he plunges; a prince, a Son of God, an heir of the kingdom, the possessor of the pearl of great price, when he arises.

He has the full faith and delight in Christ and as a dying christian confidently says:

"Festus, I plunge."

For to him to live is Christ and he knows to die is gain. Far then from fearing death he desires to depart and be with his Master and Friend. But with this truth so clearly before us we need mention a warning: However bright heaven may be, however tired and sleepy we may become, however much we may desire to depart, we are never to think, except with horror, of taking our life. We are to walk as soldiers of the cross, not as pleasure seekers. We are not to think of heaven as our reward, but of ourselves as ministers of Christ, co-workers with Him, until the time for our departure come indeed. Just as the Apostle knew to depart were gain, but stayed and worked on for the sake of his fellow men, so we are to fill up our time in Christ's service until He come and call us away. The christian then so far as death and sorrow are concerned is a confirmed optimist. He knows that as long as Christ is preached he can rejoice though he be in prison, and he knows that his light afflictions are nothing to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in Him. Paul the Apostle knew life with its joys and sorrows. He wrote that Illiad of woes found in the eleventh chapter of second Corinthians:

"In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in jour-

neyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides these things that are without that which cometh upon me daily the care of all the churches." Yet the man who wrote this said that he would rejoice, yea and I will rejoice that Christ is preached. And therein we find not only his optimism in life but in death, for in Timothy he writes: "For I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day—and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Is it not time for us as christians to stop thinking of death as our enemy, and to begin thinking of death as our friend, only remembering that the condition of the friendship is to live in Christ?

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made;
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!" Amen.

XIV.

A GENUINE CHRISTIAN.

BY THE REV. S. P. LONG, D. D., MANSFIELD, O.

"And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."—*II Samuel 23: 4.*

AVID was a man of God. At the close of his life he reviewed his life and came to his last words. God spake to him and described a just ruler. God is the Light of the world, and His children are to be lights in the world.

We are standing today in the presence of the dead; in the presence of an aged man of God who has finished his course and lived all his days as a christian. We are not to be the judges; but by their fruits we shall know them; and no one would question for a moment that this aged father was a christian. Baptized in his infancy, and confirmed in his youth, and walking in the light all these years, after three-quarters of a century in this world, God came and took him out of this world of sin and sickness to Himself in glory, as we truly believe,

A Genuine Christian.

I. *He had his nights;*
II. *He had his lights.*

Our text leads us to a sunrise after a dark night.

I. A genuine christian has his nights of *persecution, suffering,* and *death.*

David was a persecuted man. He was a shining light in this world. Saul and his son hated him. He was hounded by both of them. Others were glad to be used for the same satanic work. This should not surprise us, if we realize that a christian is one who possesses the spirit of Christ. Paul says that if anyone has not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His. This statement ought to make many church members and preachers tremble! It is one thing to be called a christian, and quite another thing to be a temple of the Holy Ghost and have Christ's spirit here among people who are by nature enemies of God. Christ was persecuted and His spirit is still persecuted in this sinful world. Christ had His dark hours; David had his dark hours; and all true christians must expect the dark hours of persecution. The life of this sainted father was a constant rebuke to ungodly people; and, of course, they treated him just as they would have treated his Master.

The wages of sin is death; and, of course, there will be suffering between the cradle and the grave. The teaching of the so-called "Christian Science" that there is no sin and no pain; that these things are simply in the mind abnormal, is one of the devil's greatest achievements in all history. The moment I say I have no pain when I know I have, I am a Christian Scientist, and—a great big liar. The truth is so rare these days that it strikes some people as sensational. Jesus and John called liars, liars, and that is what they are. In this world of hospitals, moanings, and groanings, and graveyards, and wars, and famine, tell me not that there is no pain and no darkness.

Death is coming to all of us. It is not the last moment of this life that we need to dread. The christian's death is a triumphant hour for him. It is the darkness that goes before death that the christian cannot escape. It is the leaving of this earthly house before the final farewell that takes place during the night. The time comes for all that they cannot walk as they once walked, work as they once worked, lift as they once lifted, endure what they once endured, stand what they once stood, see as they once saw.

Yes, there are nights in this world, cloudy nights, dark nights!

II. But thanks be to God, the genuine christian has also his lights in this world, and in the world to come. He has the light *of the morning*, of *a cloudless morning*, and *of a new life*.

"And he shall be as the light of the morning." When God created the world He began the day with the evening. "And the evening and the morning were the first day." Notice well that the evening was followed by the morning. Night is the harbinger of the coming morning. When a man becomes a christian, there is morning in his soul. When this man was baptized in his infancy, there was sun-up in his soul. He was born of water and the Spirit. When he was instructed in the catechism and one new light after the other came to him out of the five chief parts of the catechism, there was morning in his soul. When he went to his first communion and partook of the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, there was morning in his soul. When he came to God's house and his Sunday school and learned more and more of God's Word, there was morning in his soul.

They talk of the beauty of a clear sky, but the beauty is the effect of our knowledge of the clouds. "Night brings out the stars," and clouds are beautiful and help to beautify the cloudless sky. "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds." The christian's life is not all clouds. It is wonderful how many cloudless mornings we have in life. There are days and weeks and months and years, in some christian's lives that not a single cloud can be seen. Let me testify before you today that in a christian life of over a half a century, I have seen only two clouds of persecution; and God wiped them off the horizon almost before they appeared. Thank God for a life of cloudless mornings!

Let me read this text once more in conclusion to see its beauty. "And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain." Did you ever go out after a warm rain and see a new spear of grass make its first appearance? Did you ever see anything newer in all your life? An hour before you could not have seen anything there. A new life had appeared. It was a new life when this man was born from above by water and the spirit; but 75 years after the baptismal rain God came and took his soul home—home to a new world—home out of all sin and darkness to Himself in heaven where there is no sun, nor moon, nor stars, for He is the Light—home where he had never been bedrop of rain changes the ocean—home where all things are fore—home where his coming changed all heaven as the light and forever new. Amen.

XV.

A MESSAGE OF COMFORT AT THE GRAVE OF OUR LOVED ONES.

BY THE REV. EDWARD NELANDER, PH. D., LOS ANGELES, CAL.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God."—*Isa. 40: 1.*

T is the sacred duty of the christian pastor to speak words of comfort to those who are bereaved. The world is full of aching hearts. "Why weepest thou?" is a question that may be addressed to all the sons and daughters of humanity as they stand at the graves of their withered hopes. The wail of Ramah has come down to us. The tears of Hagar have not ceased to flow. David crying for his child, or lifting up his mournful wail for Absalom is a type of the race. Every country has its silent sleeping places where the dead are gathered. How shall we comfort these weeping ones? We can point to the consolations of God in Christ. Here is comfort indeed. Many a sorrowful child of God has looked up through blinding tears to the hills, from which help cometh, and cried: "Thy comforts have refreshed my soul."

"Hark from the mercy-seat a voice is calling—
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal."

We are to remind the sorrowing ones of:

1. *The Sympathy of Christ.*

We do not undervalue the sympathy of loving friends; and yet, with all their good intentions to impart comfort, they stand helpless in the presence of your bereavement. While you appreciate their loving kindness, you could truthfully say with Job, "Miserable comforters are ye all." The world's comfort never shows its emptiness more than at the grave.

One there is who understands. Having Himself suffered, He can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He stands waiting to comfort you. His voice, while it thrills with eternal strength, is full of tenderness. He stretches out His hands to you and says, "I understand; I am He of whom it was spoken; "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

Mourner, lean on His arm; listen to the beating of His loving heart; whisper to Him:

> "O Christ, come tenderly,
> . . . . . And by all Thy
> Permitted desolations, comfort mine!"

The tears of Jesus at the grave of Lazarus proclaim that He is one with us in the fellowship of suffering. Be assured of the tender sympathy of Jesus. "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee."

2. *The Words of Christ.*

The world has only surface comforts. It has no promises. It says, "Don't cry!" But how can we stay our tears when the heart is filled to overflowing? Besides our only relief has been the blessed fountain of tears. The world

says, "Cheer up; it is our common lot." But this is no comfort. Unbelief has no word of consolation or hope in the presence of death.

How different are the comforting words of Christ! They open to us a glimpse of what is beyond the grave. To the bereaved Martha He spoke a "word in season" that has been a world of comfort to bereaved souls ever since: "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Martha's brother was out there in the grave, but Jesus assured her that he would rise again.

Precious promises! "He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more; the first things have passed away." And, lest we think these words too good to be true, it is added that "He who sitteth on the throne"—"Saith, write, for those words are faithful and true." Then shall we once more embrace our dear ones with whom we were one in faith and hope. Then shall we see Him whose promises are "yea" and "amen."

3. *The Power of Christ.*

The raising up of the dead by Jesus during His ministry on earth is our warrant that He will, according to His promise, awake all the dead. "The dead shall be raised." There is no uncertain sound about that. It does not seem possible when we think of man's helplessness; but "Why should it be thought a thing incredible that *God* should raise the dead?" (Acts 26: 18). Put the emphasis on the word "God" and every difficulty vanishes. He who made man what he is, can make man again. Looking abroad in the earth in an agony of grief we ask, "Is there any power that can give us back our friends?" He to whom all power

is given in heaven and on earth answers: "I am the resurrection and the life. Lay your beloved dead in their graves, shrouded in a living hope and look upon the mound under which they sleep as guarded by the angels of God until that day when I shall descend with a shout, with the trumpet of the archangel and the dead shall rise."

4. *The Love of Christ.*

We need to know that we have a Friend on high who is not only all powerful, but who also loves us. Never is Christ so loving to His people consciously as when they are in the furnace of affliction. How tenderly He presses them to His bosom in the hour of grief! Every wounded heart that belongs to a child of God, the Master is going to heal by and by, but He suffers with us in the wounding. His love will make even affliction to serve us. Thus sanctified sorrows become tokens of God's great love to us. To catch a glimpse of the purposes of God in our afflictions is one of God's highest consolations. Thank God for the sorrows that have bound us more firmly to Himself!

The love of Christ brings us divine consolation in that He gives back to His people their loved ones, who have gone hence in faith. The resurrection angel says, "Come and see the place where the Lord lay; He is not here; He is risen." And faith hears a voice from heaven, paraphrasing, "Come and see the place where we laid the sainted dead, they are not here; they are risen with their Lord." To us, who weep over our dead and wonder whether we shall ever again look upon their faces, is given the promise that Christ will come and awake the sleeper.

"Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

XVI.

THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me, shall never die."—*John 11: 25, 26.*

THESE words were spoken by Jesus in the presenec of death. Shortly before, Martha and Mary had sent to Him in His retreat beyond Jordan the touching message: "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." They had made no request. In their simple trust they had thought that the mere expression of their need would bring Jesus to their aid. But Jesus, when He heard that Lazarus was sick, "abode two days still in the same place where He was." It was from no want of sympathy that He did so; but He must await the moment of His Father's will. Knowing as He did how the sickness of Lazarus would end, He yet knew that its final issue would be for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

It was, moreover, to accomplish this that at length He summoned the disciples to accompany Him to Judea. They were not at first willing to go. The perils through which their Master had lately passed were still fresh in their minds. But all their objections were overruled, on the ground that he who followed the intimations of God's will

and walked in the path pointed out to him by God, stumbled not, for he was walking in the light. And as thus Jesus indicated the principle by which His movements were directed, He pointed forward also to the work He was about to accomplish: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." These words the disciples understood in their literal sense, and it needed the express declaration of their Master to bring home to their minds the fact that Lazarus was dead. The thought that Jesus was about to raise him, does not seem to have occurred to them; but, seeing that He was resolved to return to Judea, their mingled feelings of fervent love to Him, and of despair regarding the future of His cause, found expression in the words of Thomas: "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

It is not difficult to imagine the feelings that had meanwhile been passing in the hearts of the two sisters in their quiet home in Bethany. Doubtless, after their first sending of the message, they had looked for the speedy arrival of Jesus; but when He did not come, and their brother grew worse, and was at length taken from them, to their passionate grief would be added this, the most bitter thought of all, that if Jesus had only been there, they might have spared this great sorrow. When, accordingly, word was brought to Martha that at length Jesus was approaching the village, and she went forth to meet Him, it was to this feeling that she at once gave expression: "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Not that she wished to convey any reproach. She was but uttering the thought that there was in Jesus a power to help, which in this instance had come too late. "But"—even as she uttered

the words, a deeper hope took possession of her—might it be that Jesus could still do something? She knew not what. She knew only that He was all-powerful and all-loving. "But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it to Thee." Her vague hope Jesus met with an answer purposely vague. He wished to draw out her faith, and to make clear and definite what was yet only a longing in her heart. "Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." The moment of her greatest need Jesus seized for the highest revelation of Himself. He had comfort for her in her sorrow. He had help for her now. "Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." We cannot follow in detail the rest of the wonderful scene. It is familiar to all. Enough that Jesus gave to Martha practical evidence of the truth of His words by the miracle with which He accompanied them; and that He who had brought back to life Jairus' daughter when "even now dead," and who had restored to the widowed mother the son whose body she was following to the grave, gave still higher and more convincing proof of His power, by raising him who had been already four days dead, and whose body had actually been laid in the tomb.

Such, then, are the historical circumstances of our text. Before we pass to consider the practical lessons it may so well teach us, let us notice two general truths it clearly conveys. They are expressed in the first two words of the sublime declaration. "I am," said Jesus, "the Resurrection and the Life." "I"—Martha, when first she had addressed Jesus, had looked upon Him as the channel through which

help might come, rather than as the source itself of help. But Jesus emphatically gathered up into His own person the blessing He was about to bestow, and as before He had announced Himself to be the Bread of Life, and the Water of Life, and the Light of the world, so now He pierced the darkness that lay beyond the grave, and proclaimed that He was the Resurrection and the Life.

It was this investing by Jesus of His words with a personal character which gave to them a new meaning and force. Before His time there had been in many a heathen religion earnest searchings and gropings after immortality. Men, left even to the light of nature, had felt that this world was not enough, and that they must try to offer some explanation of the mystery of death. They had soothed its horrors with soft expressions. They had pointed forward to a future state of existence, shadowy it is true, and unreal, but still one where the spirits of men might live when they quitted this mortal flesh. But, after all, their best anticipations were but guesses. There was no certainty, no definiteness, about them. They had no proof to offer of the truths they were yet so fain to believe.

Nor were the Jews much better. There does, indeed, run through the Old Testament the belief in another state of existence, but even it seems engulfed at times in the mysteries with which it is surrounded. "For in death," says the Psalmist, "there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" (Ps. 6: 5). "If a man die," asks Job in his perplexity, "shall he live again?" (Job. 14: 14).

But in the declaration of Jesus there is no vagueness, no uncertainty with all its simplicity, it is still the most com-

prehensive and far-reaching statement which men had yet received, that this life does not end all, that there is another and higher life than a merely physical one, and that those who believe in Jesus are already sharing in it.

For—and this is the second truth to which I wish to refer—Jesus does not hold out this risen life as a far-away promise of what is to come to men after death. Martha herself had already acknowledged that she knew that such a life was waiting her brother. But He offers it now. "I am"—not "I shall be," but "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

What Jesus teaches is that, for a true believer, death can hardly be said to have any real existence. It is but a change, a momentary jar in the chain of being. It is not so much the end of one life that a new one may be entered on hereafter as the door through which the already spiritually-risen man passes to enjoy in its fulness the life beyond. I know that to some this may sound very mystical and unintelligible. And yet it should not be so very hard for us to grasp the truth, as believers in Christ we are already sharers in another than a merely physical life, and that for us the life eternal is even now begun. "Every true believer," it has been finely said, "is in reality and forever sheltered from death. To die in full light, in the serene brightness of the life which is in Jesus, and to continue to live in Him, is no longer that which human language designates by the name of death. It is as if Jesus said: 'In Me he who is dead is sure of life, and he who lives is sure never to die."

Three very practical lessons we may learn from the truths we have been considering.

I.

WE ARE BID NO LONGER TO FEAR DEATH.

Left to himself, man cannot but dread the hour of dying. The leaving all that is known and loved here—the solitary departure one knows not whither—the dissolution of the body who does not shrink from thoughts such as these? Not that there have not been men who, with no belief in immortality, have yet cheerfully welcomed death as the release from this world's troubles, or who, abandoning the hope in a personal hereafter, have been content to live in the memory of good deeds left behind. But, after all, how is it with the majority of men and women? Could you willingly embrace death if you believed it to be the end of all? Could you, sorrowfully it must ever be, yet hopefully surrender to Him those dearest to you, if you were unable to look forward to meeting again in another world?

We cannot, indeed, expect—it would be unnatural to do so—that belief in Christ will at once take away all fear of death; but who does not feel that it casts over its terrors a new and soothing light? The dark valley still lies before us, but there is light upon the path. The stormy river must be crossed, and the waters are often very swift and deep, but we have at least the assurance: "When thou passest through the water, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isa. 13: 2).

Think of death in the light of truths such as these, and what a difference it makes! And if we remember, besides, what I have already tried to indicate, that death to the true

believer is but the opening of the door to the Father's home beyond, have we not cause for thankfulness and hope?

You have seen the little bird in its cage beating against the bars, struggling hard for freedom, and you have seen the same bird perhaps, when an open door has been found, eagerly darting forth to regain the liberty it had lost. Even so with Christ's people. Here they are imprisoned, confined. When death comes, it comes to them as a release from the things of sense and time. They seek a heavenly, an abiding country.

"How old are you?" a little German boy once asked Dean Stanley. "Sixty," was the answer. "Why," said the child, "all your life is over." "No," was the answer, "the best time is yet to come." And no one who has read the life or writings of another great teacher of the English Church, Charles Kingsley, can forget how he longed for death, "beautiful, wise, kind death," to come and tell him all he longed to know. It was in the light of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life that these and such as these could thus welcome death. It is only by a living trust in the same living Lord that we, too, with the great Apostle, can exclaim: "O grave, where is thy victory! O death, where is thy sting!"

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15: 55, 57, R. V.).

II.

WE LEARN NOT TO SORROW TOO MUCH FOR DEPARTED FRIENDS.

They are not dead, but gone before. Their bodies may rest in the grave, but their spirits have returned to God who gave them. Christ is not with us, as He was with the sisters

at Bethany, to restore to our sight those whom death has taken from us; but for us His promise is certain, that those who are in Him are not dead, but alive.

Has that promise no comfort for you who are mourning? Sorrow you must. The ties so closely formed upon earth cannot be broken without a pang. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with Him" (Thess. 4: 13, 14).

The great truth of the Resurrection, Christ's living testimony to His words, tells us of the new life in which our loved ones already share. It is little, indeed, that we know of that life—impossible for us to picture to ourselves the state or the occupations of those who have already entered upon it. Over the future God has cast a veil, which it is not for us in our curiosity to try and raise. Of this only we may be sure: that those who sought communion with Jesus upon earth are enjoying still higher communion now. They have left behind them all that was dark and wearisome and sorrowful. For them have been prepared some of the "many mansions" in the Father's House—many in view of the numbers that shall claim them, many in respect of the different capabilities and needs of each.

"And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall

there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21: 3, 4).

III.

WE HAVE A SOLEMN WARNING TO PREPARE EVEN NOW FOR THE FUTURE THAT AWAITS US.

There is no fact more certain than the fact of death: no law which more surely embraces all men within its scope than—"It is appointed unto men once to die" (Heb. 9: 27). And how we shall meet death when it comes, and what shall be in store for us hereafter, depends upon our lives and conduct now. It is to those who believe in Him that Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life; it is for those who are earnestly seeking them now that the "many mansions" are prepared. It was the first work of the old Egyptian kings on being appointed to rule to begin to build their tombs. In a higher sense shall we not follow their example knowing "that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with the hands, eternal, in the heavens"? (2 Cor. 5: 1 R. V.).

Let us lift up our thoughts above all that is merely wordly and selfish. Let us, as already risen with Christ, "seek those things which are above." Let us draw ever nearer to Christ Himself, and strive to make our lives like to His life. And then, when death does come, we shall welcome it with joy, not turn from it with fear. We shall be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. "And so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. 4: 17).

XVII.

SIN AND DEATH.

BY THE REV. FRED. V. CHRIST, NEW YORK CITY.

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.—*Romans 5: 12.*

OST people like to talk, but a little quiet and careful watching will disclose the fact that the noisiest of them becomes silent and thoughtful when Death is mentioned. Few people are talkative about the one thing which they fear the most, or if they are talkative it is usually a sign of hysteria. When man feels the chill air apprising him of the approach of the usher who will lead him through life's exit he is not hilarious with laughter. You who read this! You have been alone at night, when the windows and the doors creak and make innumerable little vague noises; when there are little nameless sounds all around which suggest the soft tread of thieves; when there is an atmosphere of fear and wonder and the attitude of expectancy enthralls and holds you in an invisible but powerful grip; and if by chance some practical joker inspires to scare you places a palm against the window pane, a thrill of horror is added to the thrall of

expectancy. Something like this idea or fact must have been in the mind of Jeremiah, for he said: "Death came up to our windows."

Death charms us like the eyes of the mesmerist by expectancy. It is something we will all experience once. Some of us twice—and it holds for the unconverted, natural, man a terror. We recognize at once we are given an opportunity to live. We know that afterwards is the judgment. Amid our everyday affairs, as we use the holy things of God in idolatrous and sinful ways conscience is always making a motion picture of our acquittal or our death. We each of us await the last act of the drama and like Canio in Pagliacci, sooner or later we are ready to say: "The comedy is ended." Only it is no comedy except to the imagination of the desperate. Sober thought clothes death in sombre colors. For it is the cessation of life, usually physical life as we see it. It is the total or permanent cessation of the functional or vital organs or actions of the organism. It is the final extinction or destruction of everything, the failure of the machinery of the body, the lagging and halting and final ceasing of the pulse. A fixed form marbling the limpid lips which so lately were made for love's kisses and the confession of an unsullied devotion, the cerements of the grave—the wet sponge which wipes out the recollections which have made life a joy and the ensuing blankness of a black slate. It is death in its natural sense, irremediable and inevitable, which awaits us all.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth ere gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

But as bad as death naturally seems, the Bible, the heightener and deepener of all things, heightens and deepens the meaning of death. The brightness and the glory of the life which lightens every man makes the blackness of death that darkens appear the worse by contrast. Death becomes in God's light the absence of all spiritual life. It is a separation from God—as well as from humanity. It is the apotheosis of lonesomeness which cried out:

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

but to which is added a completed spiritual and eternal ruin. It is a separation which brings the collapse of the microcosmus. This is the thing which makes calamity of so long life. It is in this sense that we say, "In the midst of life we are in death—and when illumined brings us a consciousness that we are actually dead in sin."

Not long ago I bought a book of quotations. It was a second-hand copy and it had a few marked passages, which might have been the page of some man's tragic biography. I think the former owner of that book may have contemplated suicide. For one of the quotations under the title *debt* was heavily marked and read thus: "Debt is a grievous bondage." And in another place, "Who dies pays all." If this last were indeed true, how many a man without hope, without honor, without friends, without God, would settle the account and by paying his life, pay all? But we know it is not all of death to die. Something at the last moment stays the self-destructive hand and makes us rather bear the ills we have that flee to others that we know not of. We are likely to *think* what the greatest of philosophers and poets has said:

"Aye but to die and go we know not where.
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot.
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit.
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice.
To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
Of those that lawless, and uncertain thought
Imagine howling. 'Tis too horrible.
The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, ache, penury or imprisonment
Can lay on nature is a Paradise
To what we fear in death."

The real source of our fright—the real chamber of horrors is not death, but something at its centre. It is the condemnation which death brings to us all that makes us fear it. It is the deep and mysterious connection between death and sin. It is the brooding welcome of a morn on the delectable mountains changed into the effete dismissal of a dark sinfulness which eats at the heart of our expectations. By sin came death. In Adam all die. We think we conceive, we sin and the fruitage is death, for the wages of sin are death. So death by sin enlarges his desire and cannot be satisfied, but gathers to him all nations, and heapeth to himself all peoples.

We, you and I, go out into the different walks of life. Society lays its compelling hand upon us. The dirge is forgotten for the moment in the whirl of the universal dance. We forget, but time does not forget. The neces-

sity is laid upon us. Death comes like a thief in the night. Death comes up to our windows. And we at last heed a Voice which we have so long spurned and neglected because of the allurements of the world. God says:

"Thou foolish one this night is thy soul required of thee. And the things which thou hast prepared whose shall they be?"

We have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, and so we are all subject to death. The great name of God at once peculiarly descriptive and truthful, carries with it the symbol and the reality of life. He calls Himself—"I am —Jesus as God says; before Abraham was, I am." God is life and truth. He says as the truth concerning man: "You are." It is a condemnation and a call to repentance. You are a sinner. You are in the bonds of iniquity. You are subject to death.

Death is therefore a consequence of sin and in sin becomes a necessity. It is a result of God's justice. Death is an end or a completion. I may be a death in sin, or a death to sin, and the choice is ours to make. To die *in* sin is the usury of sin because it doubles itself and ends in a second death. To die *to* sin is the mercy of sin because he who in this sense dies to sin losing his life shall save it. All this is true personally. But there was also an historical completion of sin and death. As a tree, dark and poisonous, it had a gradual unfolding, until in its growth it spread its branches over the world, breathing a subtle and awful miasma of death. And its seed taken by the prince of the power of the air is blown to all countries and all people until the whole head is sick and the heart faint. It evil poisons the unconscious votaries of ease and pleasure and

indifference. It kills outright the blighted and blasted followers of the evil one. It touches the heart of prayer with its cold blasts. It freezes the fervor of enthusiasm by its question of despair, "What's the use?" Or it lulls in the soft lap of adulation those who are prone to sleep while God calls. So Satan swings the hammock of delight under the tree of sin, and to every call of God to righteousness he whispers, Sh! Sh! Let him sleep. While all around him lurk the elements of destruction. He rears the gorgeous temples for the idolatry of the high-minded, cultured folk, carves the grotesque forms of the fetish for the simple-minded and sets up a mammon worship where he cannot hypocritically mix his evil intentions with religion. So the seed blows and the forest grows and the necessity of death is laid upon us all.

But a new voice is at last heard. A deliverer draws nigh and a cry heralding the new time is shouting the glad news. Now is the axe laid at the root of the tree. The sharp word of God rings its striking blows at the root of sin and as it dies out of its dead roots, out of old ruined humanity, there springs up a new tree. A root out of dry ground. Death is conquered and a new life beginning to grow. New branches put forth; the springtide of the God-saved is at hand. The vernal vision of humanity begins to fill us with the joy of living. New branches of life put forth and the seeds of righteousness spread by the Savior are caught up by the Spirit, which bloweth where it listeth and over the earth there begins to grow a new life. Everywhere trees of righteousness spring up.

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment

of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be justified.

So we can say, "And unto our God the Lord belong the issues of death."

Death then is the great necessity. In sin or to sin. No man can escape dying. Every man may escape dying in sin. No man really wishes to die in sin. And the only way to not die *in* sin is to die *to* sin. And the way to die *to* sin is by faith in Jesus Christ, who died that we might die unto sin and be alive unto God. It is Jesus who is able to save unto the uttermost. It is the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, which cleanseth from all unrighteousness and makes true and full of joy and peace the words, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

On the sad occasion of death we stand around the body of the one whose spirit has gone into the world beyond. The pangs of sorrow and separation make our hearts twitch with pain. Tears burn furrows in the cheeks and make the young face prematurely old. We are cut off in early life and realize that art is long and life is short. We all realize that it is but a step between us and death. Out of the wreckage of broken hearts, shattered hopes, and collapsed and dilapidated lives we cry—crying, why must this be? And the christian wishing to know the truth goes to his Bible as his guide in all matters of life and death and seeks the answer. It is this:

"By sin came death,
The wages of sin is death."

The answer is: As all have sinned so all must die.

But the Christian's search does not end in knowing this. He searches further and he sees a man like himself, but different too. This man comes from God, as God, on an excursion of love and mercy. He is the Great Physician and the Good Shepherd. The finder and the saver. He is so searching and so strong that to know Him is to surely say He is exceptionable. And as you study His life you see that He is indeed exceptional in that He is sinless. He alone could make the challenge. "Who can convict me of sin," and survive the result even of His worst enemies. Friend—stand yourself in imagination on any street corner and see the whole creation of human beings as they walk by you one after one. And as they walk ask each one these questions: Have you made a mistake? Have you ever retracted anything? Have you sinned? And the answer of each and all of them will be, Yes. They will all confess guilt and admit judgment. But in the line there will be one exception. He alone answers NO to your question. He alone has made no mistakes, retracted nothing, and never sinned. He therefore is the one man, Christ Jesus, who does not deserve to die under the law of sin. Yet the same Scripture which is our guide in all matters of life and death, says that He did die the most awful death, and we are confronted with another phase of the mystery of death. We see the death of a righteous man. We are amazed and wonder until the mystery is cleared in the words, "God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Christ then, who being without sin did not merit death, died that we might live. It is by faith in Him we die unto sin.

One more mystery confronts us. No man has returned from the grave. We have no word from the mysterious land which lies beyond. In all the years no friend has returned to tell us, no man, no teaching, no philosophy has satisfied the craving of the human soul after immortality. If a man die shall he live, has resounded through all time, echoing and re-echoing, yet to answer. Still the christian turns to his Bible. He sees the same one, Christ Jesus, dying, dead, buried. But also sees His return and hears the words:

"I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold, I am alive forever more and have the keys of Death and of Hell."

He is the first fruits of them who sleep and rest. So God's words open for us the mystery of death, by showing us its relation to sin. Its relation to Christ, and assuring us a victory over death and the grave through Jesus Christ who conquered it for us.

What am I? What are you? What are we? Beloved now are we the sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him for we shall see Him as He is.

Like Him sinless. Like Him without subjection to death. Like Him risen to the new life eternal.

And so we say of those who have died, as remaining and mourning not as the heathen without hope, but with faith abounding.

"Beloved one, you sleep, and in that sleep you hear no more the jars of this rough world. Upon some sunlit plain your spirit dreams and tries to reach the greater light beyond, where sweep low harmonies that need not rest. And there the tree of life with healing leaves gives unto each

the balm he craves the most. There is a seeming sea whose crystal waves bear no sad chant of loss or human grief, effulgent depths into which the cleansed soul may gaze at that white point, the throne of God. I would not call thee, though the snows be pure and the nights silent, lest upon your wings should fall the shadow of our earthly things." Amen.

XVIII.

THE DEATH OF SAINTS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.

BY THE REV. S. SCHILLINGER, A. M., WEST ALEXANDER, OHIO.

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."—*Ps. 116: 15.*

ORROWING husband, children and friends: Again we are called upon to witness the sad dispensation of mortality. When temporal death comes physical life ceases; therein consists the dispensation. Death is a dispensation, but instead of dispensing among it dispenses between. It dispenses between time and eternity. It takes souls out of this world and puts them into a world without end. It separated, for a time, Sarah from Abraham, and he, in a christian manner, performed the last sad rites by following her remains to the cave in the field of Machpelah. Today it is Sarah also, and a devoted husband becomingly performing the same sad rites.

Since sin has come into the world, death is a common circumstance. It comes to all, and yet it seems to us a most unnatural thing. When we for years have had daily

conversations with a beloved one, and almost in a moment her lips are forever sealed in death, as far as this world is concerned, it seems so unnatural. We can scarcely think it possible that that familiar voice should be heard no more. The sudden change makes our hearts sad and pensive. Indeed, we would have no comfort, if it were not for the precious promises of God's sure Word. They are our only comfort. Our text imparts this comfort very clearly. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." We believe that we are gathered around the casket of a saint today. We have reasons to believe it. We believe it because our departed sister confessed Christ, her blessed Savior, and persevered in her faith to the end. We believe it because she made use of the means, the Word and sacraments, which are essential to preserve and strengthen that blessed faith. That is our sweet comfort. Of course it is a comfort and satisfaction to know also that our departed sister was a true and faithful wife and mother. That is a comfort, but it is not the greatest comfort. The greatest comfort consists in realizing that she was a devoted child of God. We believe this because we believe that she loved the Word of God. As long as she was able she was regular in attendance at divine services. She did not miss communion once in the twelve years of my pastorate in this congregation. This is said not to impress you that she thought she must merit salvation by so doing, but that she thought, and rightly too, that it was necessary in order to preserve her faith in Jesus Christ, who merited the forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation for her.

Let us therefore upon the basis of our text try to comfort ourselves in this hour of sadness by considering:

I. *Who are saints? and*
II. *Why are they precious in His sight?*

The world has her so-called saints. But her saints are not God's saints. She has no higher aims than civilization. That is indeed commendable in itself, but it will never render one a saint in the sight of God. Commendable civilization, however, is moulded under the influence of the christian religion. What is the civilization in irreligious countries? Can it be called civilization at all? Are not such countries called barbarous and uncivilized countries? If men, who boast of the civilization of our country, despising the christian religion, only knew it, or wanted to know it, they would have to confess that religion has seasoned our civilization. Take the churches and the christian religion out of our country and what would its civilization be? We would be a civilization of barbarity and castes. However high an ideal civilization may reach even under the influence of christianity it cannot make saints in the sight of God. Its ideal of greatness is not developed from the right motive. If people who are not christians remain within the bounds of civilized laws, they do it either from the motive of fear or from the motive of self-praise. They do it either because they are afraid of punishment or because the laudations of their fellow men tickle their vanity. Some are civil because they are afraid of losing prestige in business; and oh, how it puffs some to hear their neighbors say, They are fine men! They may even be considered saints in the eyes of the world, but that does not make them saints in the eyes of God. Virtue and veracity

which are in themselves pleasing to God, will not render a man a saint if he has nothing more. Without the right motive they also are selfish. They constitute saints outside of the kingdom of Christ, and therefore they are saints simply in the estimation of this world. Self-honor, self-esteem and work-righteousness are the fruits of her saints. But these are not saints in the sight of God. The christian is not satisfied simply with civilization for he has learned from his Bible that he needs more to be a saint precious in the sight of the Lord.

Neither is the natural man a saint. He cannot be because he has not the Spirit of God. Of himself he will never become a saint. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2: 14. Of himself he cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God because he has no power. When the natural, or unregenerated man dies his death is not precious in the sight of the Lord because he is lost. No comfort can be administered to the friends of a person who departs this life unregenerated.

Only they are truly saints whom God makes saints. They are not simply the holy apostles and martyrs, who humbly believed in Jesus Christ and manifested their faith by letting their light shine before the world, but all to whom God has been gracious, and who through sincere repentance have received forgiveness of sins.

It is God who makes us His saints. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philip. 2: 13. As long as the disciples relied upon their reason or strength they did not have that un-

daunted faith which afterward sustained them under every cross and persecution. Peter was very bold in affirming that he would never deny his Master, but when he was accosted by a weak maid he at once denied. He was relying upon his own strength which quickly failed. But after the day of Pentecost, when, having received the Holy Ghost, he looked entirely away from himself, and alone to God, he suffered stripes and imprisonment, and fearlessly faced the martyr's death. All the other disciples except John died the martyr's death. It was God who had given them such a strong faith in their Savior. It is God who gives us the same faith. He will give every one this faith who does not resist.

But God does not make us His saints without means. The means are the Word and sacraments. He who does not despise these means will become God's saint. His Word does not only tell us who Jesus Christ our Savior is, but it works faith in our hearts which lays hold of Christ and saves.

Now, in order to give us the means of grace, God established His church on earth, and to her He has intrusted these means. If we would be His saints we must be found in the church. Indeed we cannot be saints and we cannot be saved outside the church. The ark is a type of the church. All the souls outside of the ark were destroyed by the flood. Only eight were saved and they were in the ark. Hence only they will be saved who are in the church, for the church has the Word which is the power of God unto salvation. This is our comfort today. As far as we can know our departed sister always adhered to her church. She was in the church as Noah and his family were in the

ark. She used the means of grace because God instituted them for the forgiveness of sins. Where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation.

If people only do not reject the grace of God they will be saved. Not to reject, but to accept the grace of God must be manifested in our conduct. We see this manifestation in true repentance, and a pious life. Where there is no repentance there can be no forgiveness of sins. No one can enter the church militant, and much less the church triumphant without repentance. Without it the Savior will not and cannot be accepted. If the Savior is not accepted there can be no salvation.

Repentance consists in contrition and faith. Contrition is deep sorrow for sin. As long as one does not acknowledge that he is a sinner he cannot become a saint; he does not see the necessity of the Savior, and outside of the Savior there is no saintship. Faith means to accept and adhere to Jesus Christ, the Savior from sin. When one is truly penitent on account of his sins and believes in Christ he is a saint. There are, therefore, in a certain sense, saints in this world already. Every true believer in Jesus Christ is a saint. We believe that the departed was such a saint. Of course, in this world we are not perfect saints, because we have sin yet adhering to us. Our sinful flesh however, does not prevent us from possessing the perfect righteousness of Christ by faith, if we, by the grace of God, subdue the flesh, and that is what makes us saints. Perfect saints we will be when we lay off this body of clay; when we have entered into eternal rest. That is our comfort today. We believe that she who has given occasion for this assembly, has entered into that rest. We mourn therefore, not as those who have no hope.

II. *Why are the saints precious in the sight of God?*

Because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has redeemed them. This is what the sure Word of God teaches us; hence we cannot be deceived. "We have also a more *sure* word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1: 19. This *sure* word of prophecy teaches us that Christ redeemed us. This sure comfort was given the people in the Old Testament already. Job said: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth." Job.. 19: 25. That Redeemer accomplished the whole work of redemption. He did this when He was crucified for our sins. Of this great work, upon which rests our whole comfort, the Old Testament informs us. Isaiah tells us: "He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised and we esteemed Him not. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." Isa. 53: 3-5. Here the prophet gives a clear description of the Savior's sufferings for our sins. In the New Testament we are told all about His sufferings and death for the sins of the world. That is how He accomplished the work of redemption. Now when we base the hope of our salvation upon Christ's work, we are His saints. We are therefore not tossed about as those who base the hope of their salvation upon their own works, or

upon their moral life and their civilization. They can never be certain; for the Word of God gives them no assurance that their works will save them. The Word teaches the opposite. The example of the Pharisee, who went up into the temple to pray teaches us clearly that we are not justified by our works. Paul says: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom. 3: 20. Again, he says: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. 3: 28. Our only comfort in the hour of death is to trust in the merits of Christ alone. Such are the saints whose death is precious in the sight of the Lord. But there is something necessary before we can trust in the merits of Christ. In our natural condition we cannot do it. We must be brought into possession of the redemption Christ has wrought out for us, and this is done through faith. It is the God-given hand which lays hold of the Savior and His merits. Without faith it is impossible to be God's saints. True saving faith, however, demands that we know Christ, that we acknowledge Him to be the true Son of God and the Savior of the world, and that we confide in Him as our Savior. Therein consists true, genuine, saving faith. What we dare not forget, if we would be saints, is that this faith comes from God. It is a divine work in our hearts. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Philip. 2: 13. In the definition of the third article we confess: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept

me in the true faith." We believe and teach therefore, in accordance with holy Scripture, that saving faith is purely a work of the Holy Spirit. He who does not believe this, has not the right kind of faith, and is not an unreserved saint. He is not willing to give all the glory to God that he has become a believer. He does not confide entirely in the work of the Holy Spirit, and in the merits of Jesus Christ. He is placing an obstacle in the way of coming into possession of redemption.

But finally if we would be God's saints whose death is precious in His sight, we must persevere in that saving faith to the end. This we cannot do of ourselves. The God of our salvation, who wrought faith in our hearts, preserves us in that faith to the end. He is not like a mechanic who constructs a building and then leaves it for the weather to beat upon, and eventually to crumble to pieces; but He guards and protects His saints that no danger can destroy their faith and bring them to ruin. This our merciful God will do for us if we only do not resist the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what He did for our departed sister, and this is our comfort and your comfort, sorrowing family.

Both the working of faith and its preservation are accomplished through the means of grace, the Word and sacraments. Where these are not used we have no assurance that faith will be either wrought or preserved. Here we again have comfort, for we have one before us who used the Word and sacrament of the Altar, by the grace of God, to the end. In her infancy she was baptized, and thus engrafted into Christ her Savior, at the proper age she was instructed in the religion of her Redeemer, received into

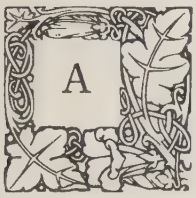
the christian church, and during her long life she strengthened her faith with the means God instituted for that purpose. Is that not a sweet comfort? Is there any reason at all why we should doubt that she is a saint whose death is precious in the sight of her God? Did not God do everything to make her a saint? Did not Christ die for her, and did not the Holy Spirit regenerate and sanctify her? What more is required to make one saint? We believe therefore that the words of our text are applicable to her: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Amen.

XIX.

SUICIDE—WORKINGMAN.

BY THE REV. R. NEUMANN, A. M., BURLINGTON, IA.

"If thou doest well, shall not thy countenance be lifted up? And if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it."—*Genesis 4: 7.*



MINISTRATION like this present one is a severe test for the servant of God. With a loud voice, this casket proclaims the Word of God: "Sin is a reproach to any people." With hearts heavy and painful we exclaim, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Not that we desire to sit as the judges of this departed brother, and say with the Pharisee, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as this drunkard and suicide." Indeed not. The departed one is in the hands of the Lord, the same Lord who has given the warning: "Judge not, that ye be not judged." All of us in this assembly have reason enough, like the publican, to stand afar off, and not so much as lifting our eyes to heaven, say: "God be merciful unto me a sinner; by Thy mercy keep and guard me against a sudden and impenitent end." By judging others we condemn ourselves. Yet for this very reason we may say: "If the Lord had been his portion, if He, who

does not cast out the least that comes to Him seeking help, had been the Savior of and the Ruler over this unfortunate life, now extinct, we would certainly not in this hour, with a humbled, lamenting widow and with weeping children, stand at this bier, but might instead rejoice over a sinner whose only desire had been to be healed, to be saved by the Almighty power of the Savior of sinners." The present experience is like a mighty sermon, addressed to our consciences, so that everyone who has ears to hear, must hear it. O earth, earth, earth, hear the Word of the Lord; "If thou doest well, shall not thy countenance be lifted up? And if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door; and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it."

Friends, hereafter let us have greater fear of sin, and of that sin especially to which our brother has fallen a victim. He did not resist soon enough, he did not early learn to fear its wanton charm and to shun its enervating desire. We must rule over sin. Not, however, by our own reason and strength. You know Him who will give us strength to battle, Jesus Christ, whose gracious power is made perfect in our weakness, who is willing and anxious to heal our deceitful and corrupt heart of its iniquity, as well as from all sorrow and tribulation.

Unto this gracious Lord do I commend you, weeping mourners. We are able somewhat to realize the woes that have racked your souls since that fearful noon-hour of last Wednesday; we can imagine your longing for support, for sympathy and comfort. To Him, therefore, do we direct you, to Him who across this casket stretches out His loving hands, saying, "Come unto Me, with Me there is rest for your weary souls." Go to Him! They that abide in Him,

resting on His bosom, walking by His side, are proof against sin and guilt, against all the temptations and allurements of evil. Go to Him, that He may heal you, that He may bind up your wounds, and in the days to come, days of distress or danger, your souls will be upheld by this word of old, which from the first pages of the sacred record sounds its admonition to us now: "If thou doest well, shall not thy countenance be lifted up? And if thou doest not well, sin coucheth at the door, and unto thee shall be its desire; but do thou rule over it."

XX.

THE GRAND ARMY IN PROPHECY.

Memorial Day Sermon.

"So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and they stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."—*Ez. 37: 10.*

IN many churches of Germany old battle-flags faded by time, stained by blood, and torn by strife, are conspicuously displayed and reverently preserved. They continually awaken memories of glorious achievements; they silently teach that religion is not only the inspiration to heroic actions, but is the sacred guardian of their renown. The church in which we now meet would welcome in its decorative appointments a specimen of Old Glory, that had accompanied the brave over the battlefields of the struggle for emancipation and the union of the North and the South. How eloquently would the flag speak to the eye! How potently would it stimulate patriotism, rebuke sordid partisanship, how impressively would it identify the well-being of the country with the ascendancy of christianity. Since we may not hope to see these glorious emblems here, we are glad that they can in a degree accomplish the end they would serve, by welcoming to our altar the representatives of the Grand Army. The

annual gatherings of veterans in our churches testify to their belief in the union of faith and freedom; and, on the side of the churches are an assurance that the memory of their deeds is cherished in the hearts of the members, even if they are not emblazoned on the walls of the sanctuary.

In seeking to render this "Memorial Sunday" advantageous to all, I have chosen a text which brings to our attention one of the most striking visions recorded in the Bible. Being suggestive perhaps of the mysterious and glorious consummation of the Resurrection, it is primarily meant to represent the resuscitation of Israel as a nation and the revival of its national spirit. This is made plain in verses 1, 12 and 13, where the Hebrews complain that their bones are dried, and their hope lost; and where God is represented as opening their graves and bringing deliverance. The imagery is admittedly weird and bold. Ezekiel finds himself in a valley filled with bones—"very many and very dry." The spectacle is appalling and melancholy. Whence came the dead? What caused this desolation? As he contemplates the tragic scene he hears a voice inquiring: "Can these dry bones live?" The prophet, realizing the limitations of human knowledge, answers, "O God, Thou knowest." He is commanded to preach, nor does he falter to obey by the manifest absurdity of the injunction; for can dry bones hear? He delivers his message nothing daunted; and he is rewarded by witnessing a strange sight. The dry, bleached bones came together as he preached, the flesh came on them and the Divine Spirit breathed on them, and they arose on their feet "an exceeding great army." In this way there was figured to the contemporaries of Ezekiel the up-

rising of Israel, long as one dead, and an uprising that denoted vigor and aggressiveness, out of which comes the union of the tribes into a consolidated government: "For I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all."

Another exceeding great army moves before me, as I speak—the Grand Army—and to me, through Ezekiel's vision, there come disclosures suggestive of its history, its obligations and its destiny; and on these disclosures I would have you meditate.

I. I look backward this morning in the history of America to a period of serious and melancholy depression in national life, in 1859-1860. The country through the decade that closed the first half of the 19th century was not unlike a beautiful and fertile valley dominated by death. Dry bones everywhere. The freshness and early enthusiasm of triumphant liberty, the exultant and almost romantic mood of the Colonial patriots had died away, and instead there prevailed a hard, sordid, unyielding selfishness. States were not closely allied to each other and a wide cleavage separated the South from the North. "Compromise" was the guiding star of politicians. "The Missouri Compromise," "The Fugitive Slave Law," and other measures, gave evidence of a desire to postpone the fateful day of settlement. Conscientiousness, when it protested against slavery, was identified by multitudes with fanaticism; and chivalrous determination to extend the area of freedom was counted little short of delirium. The absence of generous impulses, the lack of patriotism, and the absorbing devotion of the individual citizen to his own affairs, were so marked that the South dared to assume that the North would not

put itself out of the way to fight. When the secession crisis arose, the conduct of the administration at Washington, and the protests of the extreme peace-party went far toward justifying the assumption of those who held in contempt the loyalty, if not the courage, of the people. Verily, as I look upon history in those dark days, there were many bones and they were very dry, and when the guns opened on Sumter, there seemed to sound—in the roar and smoke of the powder—a voice as the voice of God. "Son of man, can these dry bones live?" and through the gloom and agony from many a trembling, doubting and almost despairing soul sprang the answer, "Lord God Thou knowest." Then a strange thing occurred. Thousands of pulpits, thousands of newspapers, tens of thousands of women in their homes, thought they heard a command from heaven saying—"Preach"—and almost simultaneously there arose the voices of all these human prophets exclaiming, "Oh ye dry bones hear the word of the Lord"; and "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live," and suddenly a new spirit possessed the land. There was a mighty stirring in town and hamlet, in city and village, on hill and country site. Bone came to its bone. Bands of recruits marched along the dusty roads and muddy streets, camps of instruction were formed, while the shrill fife and piercing trump awoke the echo of day and night. These groups and companies grew into regiments; and then they were massed together into an exceeding great army, and the Grand Army of the Republic appeared in history and began to make history.

I believe no military power, not even the crusaders, was ever so truly the creation of moral and religious forces

as was this army. The pulpit had much to do with its origin, and the motives which governed it were not gain or conquest, but the preservation of freedom. A great revival had swept over the States during the years immediately preceding the outbreak; and when the flag was insulted, christianity answered by hanging the colors over her altars, and twisting them over her church doors. A Lutheran pastor near Philadelphia, after preaching a strong sermon on patriotism, unfastened his robe and stood before his congregation in the uniform of a soldier, declaring that for a time he would exchange his clerical garb for the northern uniform, his pulpit for a steed, the Bible for a sword to fight the cause of humanity. When calling for recruits the whole manhood of the church arose ready to join the gallant minister. Many other pastors scandalized their "copperhead" neighbors by calling on Sunday for recruits; and found in their Bibles the argument for war. Certain pastors of the kind who again in 1898 blessed the banners of Spain, and who have not apparently a blessing left for Cuba, Porto Rico and the Philippines, were horrified that ministers of the Gospel should be in politics; but to the honor of their parishioners be it said, they paid no attention to them, but yielded to the mighty movement that created the Grand Army. Impressively are we taught, by this genesis of military hosts, the stupendous power and value of an open Bible. As the prophet molded the character and shaped the destinies of Israel, so, if not the personality of the preacher, the message of the preacher has gone far toward determining the career and fortunes of America. It has been from the beginning, and never more so than in 1860, the child of sacred teachings. Born of re-

vealed truth, nursed in the cradle of the Scripture, it was their voice that moved it to take up arms against slavery, oppression and disloyalty.

And as the Grand Army was summoned into being by moral agencies the history it made was pre-eminently moral history. Some military expeditions have gloried in showing vast territories captured from the foe, or in exacting enormous indemnities, or in wreaking vengeance on defenceless citizens. But the boys in blue, while winning flags and cannons on many a battlefield, neither extended the territorial domain of the Republic, nor beggared provinces that her treasury might be full. They added not acre to acre; they despoiled not states; neither did they make war appear, as it does mainly in all history, a mercenary affair. The result of their suffering and bravery were mainly moral, not material, though, of course, material prosperity has followed, as is usually the case, substantial moral gains. They fulfilled the prophetic vision. The nation, like the sticks of Judah and Joseph, became "one in their hand," and "neither shall they (the North and the South), be divided into two kingdoms any more at all." Through them the cause of division was annihilated. They restored that which had gone out of the way and opened the prison to them that were bound. Slavery was abolished, humanity was exalted above race, patriotism above sectionalism, and the first syllables of the Divine lesson, not yet spelt out fully by the nation, that prejudice and taste should not govern in our relations to each other, but only and ever justice and right were laid down. The moral is always grander than the material. I would rather light up a child's soul than an orb in the sky; I would rather teach

a boy how to learn to make his living than to give him a living; I would rather overcome *one* iniquity than subdue a warlike city; and I would rather share in the renown of those who have unified the citizens of a common country, vindicated law and order, and opened the way for human progress, than of those who have, like Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, extended the boundaries of an empire over the graves of conquered peoples.

II. When a great service has been rendered, and its blessings have been long enjoyed, and they who wrought it have diminished in number, it is not uncommon as the survivors appear, especially if they are gray and aged, for the question to be put: "Can these dry bones live?" From some things said one might infer that certain people were of the opinion that the remnant of the Grand Army cannot live to any advantage to the commonwealth. But it is my privilege to cry out, "O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." It is never proper to conclude that a man is dead until the doors of the tomb have been barred upon his corpse. Nor is it wise to assume that old soldiers have no heart for a fight, whether with brains, ballots or bullets. King Tarquin himself, despite his extreme age, rides in front of his Romans in full armor. The king of Bohemia at Crecy, old and blind, charged at the head of his troops, leading the forlorn hope of the Hussites. On the shoulders of Talbot rested the weight of 80 years when he attacked the French at Matillon; and Daniel Doria, at 85, sailed out to sea to attack his ancient enemy, the Turk, while Dandolo, elected Doge of Venice at 84, stormed Constantinople at 94. Where are their successors? It is related of the men of Bryan in Ireland, that when they heard the

battle had gone against Ireland they said: "We are too weak to stand up and fight, but you drive some stakes in the ground, and then carry us out of the hospital and fasten us to the stakes, and then we will fight with the other arm." So it was done, and, upheld by their hands, these heroes, who ought to have been in bed, fought to the bitter end. Even bones had better not be despised. Age and weakness need not incapacitate. The Grand Army has in it much force and vigor. In an emergency it could give a good account of itself. It has no business to allow itself to be considered as out of practical national affairs. "Hear ye the word of the Lord"—live, and live the fullest life possible.

Born originally of the Divine purpose you ought to try to understand the divine plan in Providence and conform yourselves thereunto. The battle is on a small scale, and in a visible way, a picture of a grander conflict in which every man has to take part or act the coward. Contending forces are everywhere. The destructive and the constructive are in everlasting conflict, and the powers of darkness are arrayed against the agencies of light. Wherever the sons of God meet there is Satan in their midst. Where the apostles gather there Judas puts in an appearance. When Washington commands, a Benedict Arnold professes patriotism. When the Union is endangered men trained in military skill in its academies raise against it the traitor's sword. Good is always assailed by evil; and the struggle between them is ceaseless. Nations are intermittent in their conflicts and rest in the security of their preparations for war; but evil never pauses—she assails and arms herself as she goes. We may rejoice that the glory stripe of the

"Wilderness," or of "Chancellorsville," and other sanguinary fields is behind us; but immeasurably the battle of humanity, in which it fights against ignorance, iniquity, intolerance and inequality, spreads everywhere about us. And yet multitudes have apparently no interest in the issue. But real life is measured by its concern for the victory of right and by its labors in that direction. Veterans live! There is no real life without a part in the world—conflict which shall decide the future of mankind. And do not for a moment imagine that the conflict is less actual, less stupendous and less glorious than the struggle for the Union, because it is less ostentatious and less in its manifestations of physical force. Bulk is not necessarily power; bigness is not greatness. The mountain rivulet and the dew-fall are more necessary to nature than the thunder tempest of rain. A big drum in an engagement never kills like a minnie ball; and in health a microbe may be as deadly as the strength of a horse, and more so than the trumpeting of an elephant. Christ drew his illustrations from little things; from lilies and birds, not from star and mountain ranges. He was gentle enough to charm children, and sufficiently terrible in His gentleness to alarm rulers. It is wrong to suppose that pomp, pageantry and parade are indispensable to a soldier's work. The details of the battle may be forgotten, but the example of bravery never dies; an oration may vanish with the wind, while a kind word spoken to a desponding soul may live forever; and many a contest of the war you have survived may become obscure in coming years, but the magnanimity of U. S. Grant to General Lee can never perish. You, therefore, men of the Grand Army, in civilian dress, and all unarmed, in the obscure ways of

your various callings, can yet perform a soldier's task and earn your right to sleep beneath the laurel.

And you can do this by laboring to preserve the Union you have saved. This indeed should be your chief concern as members of the Grand Army. Occasionally some unscrupulous politican, belated on some issue, threatens the country with secession. There may be theories, habits, deeds, tending in the long run to feuds and alienations, annulling the Union in spirit, if not in fact. There may be such a thing as a disruption within the Union, an aggregation of states without the amalgamation of their citizens. Whatever tends to permanent division ought to be overcome. To preserve what has been conquered, no labor should be spared to exalt and actualize the American idea! What is that? It begins according to Tocqueville with the assumption that every man is qualified to take care of himself, hence the doctrine of individualism and of personal liberty: it proceeds on the assumption that every man before the law is equal to every other man, hence the doctrine of human rights; it further assumes that every man is entitled to a share in the general government, hence the doctrine of representation; it assumes in addition that for every man to take care of himself, to rule and be ruled, he must be *enlightened,* hence the doctrine of the free public schools; it finally concludes that the thought, conscience and beliefs of every man are beyond the jurisdiction of law, hence the doctrine of liberty of speech, liberty of worship and the liberty of the press. It is the duty of the citizen to realize this idea in himself, in his own character and conduct, and in proportion as he does so will he prove a friend of the Union. A scene is reported as having occurred re-

cently in the South. A colored lad in a quarrel had defeated a white lad, whereupon a group of white men demanded from the black father his son that they might chastise him. The negro refused to surrender him. Then the assailants approached with guns and brands to fire his house. But the negro defended himself. The foe advanced, he fired. Several fell before his deadly rifle. The assailants retreated to seek reinforcements, and, as the negro had fled, they went in search with hounds. I have not heard the sequel. This is the un-American idea. It outrages law, tramples on right, breeds hatred—and wherever imitated, between whites and blacks, or between whites, with or without arms—in a word when one class, society, combination, party, be it mercantile, political or religious, arrays itself to crush, and ruthlessly destroy everything dear to the freeman, then the Union is jeopardized, and then the veteran should use his vote and his personal influence to stay the infamous wickedness.

III. I have said that this prophecy of Ezekiel in its primary sense has reference to national quickening; and that only remotely, if at all, has anything to do with the future and immortal life. While I reiterate this opinion, yet I hold that it may still be taken as a revelation of that mysterious consummation. And well may we pause to consider it in this light at this Memorial Service, when, while it is eminently fitting we should recall history and enforce duty, we ought not to fail in comforting bereaved hearts with its assurance of a better existence beyond the trials of the present world. Already in anticipation of Decoration Day, widows or orphans are scanning the portraits of the dead and are musing on their fate. And when in many

cemeteries the reverent hosts march with flowers, and pause here and there by lowly graves to lay them down, the question will arise unbidden: "Can these dry bones live?" The thought grows as the proportions of this sweet ceremony enlarge in our fancy: "Can they live?" Can these dead armies, these vast encampments of heroes—can they live? And some, yea many, not irreverently, not even willingly, doubt—sit down upon the hillocks, scent the perfume from field and flower—and slowly answer: "Lord God, Thou knowst." Oh! but can *we* know? I speak with the utmost reserve on this high theme; and yet I speak strongly. It seems at least strange to me that the men of the loftiest character, the men who of all others were pure and spiritual, answer our questionings with their confident asservations; and that still we distrust. Such exceptional souls, not to mention Jesus Himself, as Paul, Plato, Luther, Emerson and Wordsworth, seem to have looked straight through the boundaries of mist and shadow into a world beyond. Shall we discredit their testimony? If we cannot see as far as they, shall we decry their vision? Some men perceive the beautiful when we do not, and others have souls for harmony and we may be dull of hearing; but may we not use their eyes and ears—and believe? The more fully we attain to christian experience, we too must hope for the longest and grandest outcome from this earthly life of ours. Conviction of immortality does not spring so much from argument as from feeling; and the more we feel in common with Jesus Christ the more unwaveringly will we believe with Him. There has often been expressed the doubt whether the profession of the soldier does not so blunt the sensibilities as to almost preclude the

possibility of religious expectations. It may be so; and you who have been soldiers may have to guard against this contingency. But that it is not inevitable may be proven by notable examples. You have heard the following story: "A private at the battle of Blenheim was heard to exclaim just before going into action: "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul." This was matched by the good bishop of Rochester with a very different prayer also uttered by a soldier on the eve of an engagement: "God, if on the day of battle I forget Thee, do not Thou forget me." And many famous fighters have been as simply devout as this humble private, among whom may be named Gustavus Adolphus, Ziethen, Cromwell, Kempenfelt, Bluecher, Generals Havelock, Grant, Jackson, Howard and indeed many others in ancient and modern times. When so many who have followed arms have also followed Christ, there can be no other than an imaginary obstacle between you and your Savior; and hence beween you and the radiant conviction of man's immortal blessedness.

But whatever may be your present belief, we are confident "that they who sleep in the dust of the earth shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth." When we read this Book of God misgivings disappear. These dry bones shall live. The Grand Army shall revive again. There is to be another muster, another roll call, another marshalling of the hosts. "For they shall come from the east and west, from the south and the north"—from beneath the shadows of the hills, from the valleys and from the seas. Our heroes are not dead: they are sleeping; resting in their tents; and shall yet hear the command to rise and march. What a day that shall be, when death shall be swal-

lowed up in victory; when comrades and friends shall meet, when broken ties shall be reunited, when all feuds shall be forgotten, and the Blue and Gray be forever one! No language can describe the hosts of the redeemed, comprising the saved of every age and clime; and inspiration struggles with their vastness and refers to them as an "innumerable multitude," as great as the sand of the sea—as an "exceeding great army." Nor can we measure their happiness as with triumphant shout they recognize the completion of God's purposes of grace, when all tribes and kindreds shall be one, with one King, the Lord Christ, to reign over them throughout eternal ages.

Will you be there, veterans of the G. A. R.? Pause, consider. In a famous French salon there is a picture called "La Cene" by Bouveret, representing Christ and the twelve disciples at the Last Supper. Christ is central in the group, and He stands holding a cup of blood-red wine in His right hand while His left rests on a loaf of bread. He is clothed in white, and His garments cast a bright light on the faces of the disciples, and their reflection renders His own face pale. What a marvelous face is His; strong, calm, exalted and yet inexpressibly sad. Notwithstanding the other figures, He draws all attention to Himself as He seems to say, "This is My blood." I need hardly say anything of the disciples unless to add that they are mainly intelligent, substantial, sun-burned men, serious but with nothing idealistic about them. John indeed resembles Jesus, but the rest are only vigorous, bearded, ordinary looking Jews. The thought in this famous picture should appeal to you, veterans of the Grand Army. It presents the figure of the world's sacrifice. You, as you march to the ceme-

tery, will think of your comrades. They will become as one sufferer to you, and you will hear the plaintive words, "This is my blood shed for our country"—and you will venerate the memory of the martyred heroes. It is well! But remember there is Another. The one sublime Personage who taught us how noble and sweet it is to die for others, who Himself inspired all that was most glorious in our war for the Union, and who unites us to hear Him as He exclaims: "This is My blood of the new covenant shed for"—not for renown, not for temporal blessings merely—but for "the remission of sins." Receive this truth, then shall His light fill you with light, and you too shall be prepared at last to stand with the saved in the glorious Grand Army of the grace of God!

APPENDIX.

THE BURIAL SERVICE.

THE BURIAL SERVICE.

A. At the Home.

(Wherever it is desired, a hymn is sung, after which the pastor says:)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

or

To our God, who alone hath immortality, be honor and power forever and ever. Amen.

or

Jesus Christ, who was dead, but now is alive, be praised forever more. Amen.

Dearly Beloved. Since it has pleased God Almighty to summon our beloved brother (sister) from this vale of tears and, as we hope, has advanced him (her) to everlasting rest, and since this despensation of our heavenly Father moves us to sorrow, let us in order that we may practice christian moderation, hear the word of God as it is recorded in (here quote passage):

(In ordinary cases.)

I Thess. 4:13-18.

But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

(In the case of an aged person.)

Psalm 90.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a

sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away. Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.

(In the case of Adults.)
John 11:20-27.

Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that

even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She said unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

In the case of a young man or boy.)
Luke 7:11-15.

And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

(In the case of a young lady or girl.)
Matth. 9:18, 19, 23,-25.

While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My

daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did his disciples. And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

(In the case of a child.)

Job. 14:1-5.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not. And doest thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass;

or

Psalm 103:15-19.

As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; to such as keep his covenant,

and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

LET US PRAY.

(A free prayer or one of the following.)

1.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth, shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us, by his holy Apostle Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him; we humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him; and that at the general Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

2.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, we thank thee because thou hast taken our brother (sister) out of sorrow and trial into everlasting rest. Dear Redeemer, we confess with

Job: "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord! Thy will be done, O Father almighty. Help us to be comforted and assured that we have not lost our brother (sister) but have only sent him (her) ahead to heaven, whither we desire to go ourselves. Establish in us, we pray thee, the faith that this body, which lies before us in the helplessness of death, shall on the last day be raised up with power and great glory, and that we shall meet each other with thee in the life everlasting. Grant us all thy Holy Spirit, to put us in mind how soon we may have to depart, to the end that we may constantly hold ourselves in readiness by repentance and true faith, to follow thee rejoicingly, whenever thou shalt summon us from this life of sorrows into thy heavenly kingdom. O thou, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost livest and reignest forever and ever. Amen.

3.

Almighty God, who by the death of thy Son hast overcome sin and death, and by his resurrection hast restored innocence and everlasting life, to the end that we should be delivered from the dominion of the devil, and that by the power of the same resurrection our mortal bodies should be raised up from the dead; grant that with our whole heart we may confidently believe this, and finally with all thy saints, be partakers of the joyful resurrection of the just; through Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

(Another hymn may now be sung, after which the pastor may close:)

They that sow in tears,shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

(In case the cortege moves to the cemetery from the house.)

Let us now attend the mortal remains of our departed brother (sister) to his (her) last resting place, but the spirit we commend into the hands of Him who gave it.

(In case of a church service:)

Let us now attend the mortal remains of our departed brother (sister, child) in Christian order to the church

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

Amen.

B. At the Church.

(After the prelude the pastor may say from the altar:)

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.

We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

Amen.

(After this a hymn or an anthem may be sung.)

The following Scripture lessons are suitable to be read:

On death in general—I Thess. 4, 13-18; John 5, 24-29; I Cor. 15, 35-50; I Cor. 15, 51-57; Psalms 31, 34, 39, 42, 71, 73, 90, 126, 139.

On the death of an adult: John 11, 20-27.

On the death of a young man: Luke 7, 11-25.

On the death of a young woman: Matth. 9, 18, 19, 23-25.

In case of a sudden death: Luke 13, 1-5; Psalm 103, 15-18.

On the death of children: Mark 10, 13-16.

(After this the pastor may offer a free prayer or use one of the following:)

(In the case of a child.)

1.

O, thou Father of Love, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named! According to thy mysterious, yet always wise and holy counsel, thou hast called hence the soul of a beloved child and transported it into thy heavenly kingdom. Thou seest, Lord, the pain of these parents, who are called to walk the sorrowful path to a child's grave. Unto whom shall they come

with their sorrow but to thee, the God of all comfort, who, indeed, inflictest wounds, but who art able also to bind them up.

Therefore, we look up to thee, our God and Father, as the one in whom alone we may find consolation. Teach these mourning parents humbly to rely upon thee and in confidence, patience and hope to submit themselves to thy fatherly will. Let a ray of that glory, which in the world to come will illumine us, lighten the darkness of the grave, into which the precious form of this child is to be laid. Let the separation become a new tie to bind these mourners the more firmly one to another and to attach them to their heavenly home. We praise thee, O God, for all that thou hast done for their departed child while here on earth, and for the glory now revealed to it among the host of the blessed redeemed, who rest in thee, and who rejoice in that heavenly glory which was promised for them and for all the children of God by Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son. Do thou grant, dear heavenly Father, strength and faithfulness to all parents, to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, so that by thy grace they may appear before thy throne able to say, "Behold them, whom thou has entrusted to us: none of them have we lost! Amen.

2.

O, thou living and eternal God, who turnest man to destruction; and sayest, return, ye children of men! We render thee heart-felt thanks for the goodness and

mercy, which thou hast shown within the short span of its earthly existence to this child which now thou hast gathered to eternal rest. We especially thank thee for thy grace and gift of Holy Baptism, whereby this child was made thine own and an heir of everlasting salvation. We thank thee that now its soul basks in the sunlight of thy presence, walking in the communion of the angels, filled with heavenly joy forever; and that on the last day, when body and soul will be reunited, it shall appear with joy before thy countenance.

Let these beloved parents and all other dear ones be comforted with the knowledge of thy good will, and heal thou the wounds of their sorrow. Let this be their consolation, that this child has attained to victory from strife; to deliverance from all sorrow, sin, and death, to life and salvation; and that in thy good keeping and care it is forever safe.

May it please thee to make us, who are still in the body, partakers evermore of thy grace and mercy, so that we may daily repent, and become as little children, and by faith be and evermore remain in the fullest sense thy children; and passing our days in thy service may finally be made heirs of thine eternal and glorious kingdom. Grant this for the sake of thine everlasting love and mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(In case of a young person.)

O Lord, our God, with sad hearts are we about to lay to rest the lifeless form of a young man (woman). In the midst of his (her) career has he (she) been called

hence, and his (her) early departure has brought to nothing the joys and hopes of all his (her) loved ones. Who may resist thy counsel? Who may question why thou hast done this? Verily thou art a mysterious God, yet thou art Love, and all thy thoughts towards us are thoughts of peace and not of sorrow. Therefore, be it done as thou wilt! We adore thy ways, even if unsearchable to us.

O Lord, thou hast guided the departed one with paternal love from childhood, and hast blessed him (her) manifoldly in body and soul throughout the short course of his (her) life. In the days of his (her) youth didst thou stretch out thine hand to draw him(her) unto thee, according to thine abundant mercy. Glorify now in him (her) thy gracious compassion in Christ to all eternity; and let us all, especially the young among us, by the early going of this one be awakened, to consider in season the things of our peace; to the end that, denying worldly lust, we may be faithful to Christ unto the end, and on the day of his manifestation in great glory, be able to meet him with joy and not with shame. From thee, the God of all comfort, do we implore consolation and strength for the family and all the friends who by the death of this dear brother (sister), have been deeply saddened. Establish them, we beseech thee, in the faith, that even through tribulation thou doest bless, that thou chastenest thy children for their good, in order that they may attain to eternal life.

Grant that we all may evermore humbly submit to thy paternal will, that under thy visitations we may be-

come wiser and better fitted for this life and for that which is to come Amen.

(In the case of an adult.)

O thou Lord of life and death! Again hast thou called from time to eternity a member of our congregation, and hast thereby reminded us of our own mortality. In deep humility we adore thy holy will, according to which, sooner or later, all the children of men are summoned to appear before thy throne. Thou hast graciously prolonged our lives to this day, in order that we might have time and opportunity to work out our salvation and continue our preparation for eternity. Help us, O Lord, that we may carefully employ the time of grace granted to us to thine honor and the sanctification of our own souls. Impress us deeply, we beseech thee, with the thought of our mortality, so that we may daily be reminded of our last hour. Let us realize in ever fuller measure the uncertainty of things earthly; that time is passing, and that soon we will enter the portal of eternity. By thy good Spirit awaken and arouse us to hasten and save our souls. Destroy within us all that may disquiet us at our departure, all the service of sin, all the power of darkness, all unlawful desires and anxious cares, to the end that our souls may be free and ready to leave this world, whenever thy holy will shall so ordain.

Let our whole life become one preparation for death, that we may await the hour of our release in all soberness and holiness. And when by faith and patience we shall have finished our course, and must pass through the val-

ley of the shadow of death, be thou then our rod and staff, in order that thy grace may be glorified in us. Grant us a joyful departure from this world, so that when our body is laid to rest in the earth, our spirit may depart in peace, holding fast in true faith to the Saviour. Gather us at last into the heavenly mansions, where we shall join thy glorified children in great exultation, and be united with them to behold the wonders of thy love and glory and praise thy holy Name, for ever and ever.

Amen.

2.

O, Almighty God, our heavenly Father, how indeed is every man at his best estate, altogether vanity! Thou hast set a bound to our life which we can in no wise pass over. Again this day is this truth evidenced, as we carry one of our christian brethren (sisters) to his (her) rest in the grave.

We praise thee for all thy goodness manifested in his (her) life from the day of his (her) birth; especially that thou didst receive him (her) in Holy Baptism, and didst thereby regenerate him (her) to that new life which is in Christ, and that afterwards thou didst graciously instruct him (her) in thy Word, and didst often feed him (her) with the body and blood of thine only beloved Son. We thank thee also for the days of trial with which for his (her) good thou didst visit him (her), and finally that thy gracious help was extended to him (her) in the last hour.

O thou God of all comfort, pour out of thy consola-

tion upon this mourning family and sorrowing friends; send unto them thy Holy Spirit, the true Comforter, that they may be able to discern thy love even in their sorrow, and humble themselves under thine almighty hand. Chiefly would we pray, however, that thou wouldst establish them by the blessed hope of the resurrection and of eternal life, which by his innocent sufferings and death Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, our Saviour, has secured for us.

Teach us all who accompany this pilgrim to his last resting place, so to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom, and laying hold upon the grace of Jesus Christ, work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Help us faithfuly to employ the short time of grace, so as ever to grow in faith, and being comforted in all our trials, crosses, misery and death, may we be adorned with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and in him finally gladly depart, to an inheritance of eternal life and joy in the eternal rest that remaineth for the Saints. Amen.

(In the case of a father (mother) who has left children unprovided for.)

O, Eternal God, merciful Father! Graciously look down upon us, who are in deep distress over the death of this brother (sister). Thy thoughts are not our thoughts, neither are thy ways our ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are thy ways higher than our ways, and thy thoughts than our thoughts. Help us in child-like trust to submit to thine unsearchable counsel, and under any affliction to hold fast the word of comfort.

Whatsoever thou doest, is well done! Let thy help be given to the bereaved home, and raise up true friends and willing helpers to this fatherless (motherless) family. Heal the wounds of this stricken husband (wife) and grant that he (she) may be steadfast in that confidence, which has great reward. To thy gracious care we commit the orphans, who weep at this grave. Be their provider and guide. Preserve them in living faith, and cause even this painful visitation to turn out for their good.

O, Lord God! Thou seest all misery and trial. Those bereaved ones commend to thee their cause; thou art the Father of the orphan. Visit with thy strong consolation all those that labor and are heavy laden and grant them in the great day of Christ to stand with gladness before thy throne, in happy reunion with all those over whom they mourn here in time. Have mercy upon all the sick and dying among us, and bring their days to a good and gracious end. And when our last hour shall come, assist us by thy power, that we may look up to him who is the Saviour of our souls, Jesus Christ: that cleansed by his blood, we lay hold of the blessed hope of eternal life.

Amen.

(In the case of an aged member of the congregation.)

Gracious God, our Father! Thou hast done great things by this aged member of our congregation whose mortal remains we are about to commit to the grave. Thou hast verified unto him (her) the blessed word of promise, "Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you! I have made and I will

bear; even I will carry and deliver you." Praise and thanks be unto thee for all the fatherly guidance with which thou hast attended this one in body and soul through a long period of years. And especially do we praise thee, that for his (her) preparation for eternity thou hast granted him (her) a long season of grace, and hast in joy and sorrow spoken forcefully to his (her) heart. Into thy hands we commend him (her), with the fervent prayer that thou wouldst manifest thyself the God of Love and Mercy to all eternity, even as thou hast done in the days of his (her) earthly pilgrimage.

Lord God! We know not when thy summons may reach us, nor whether we, as this departed one, shall attain unto an old age. Our times are in thy hand. But, be our parting from this world close at hand, or afar off, we pray most earnestly, that thou wouldst hold up to us daily the deep meaning of this our stage of preparation. Let us not be overcome and enticed by the perishing things of time. Direct our mind heavenward. Help us by thy Holy Spirit, that in the faith in Christ Jesus we may at last finish our course. And grant that in our last hour we may be able to profess in thy Name: "Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," that he may be forever with the Lord. Amen.

(In the case of a person of questionable character.)

O, thou merciful, eternal God, our heavenly Father, by the sad death and departure of our fellow-christians and other mortals, thou art daily setting before us the general human misery of our lot and the mortality which

belongs to us. Grant us, therefore, by thy Holy Spirit, that wisdom and understanding which are from above; that thereby we may be deeply moved to awake out of our sinful sleep and spiritual death, to die unto all sin, especially the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. On the other hand, by true repentance, and by every evidence of christian love and patience, and through a hearty desire for things eternal, may we enter into the new life of the Son of God and abide therein; so that we may be able any day, yea any hour of our life here on earth, to realize a blessed end, and in the world to come be found worthy to escape eternal death and condemnation. And when the hour of our temporal death shall come, guard us against a sudden and fearful end, and let our souls be committed into thy hands, that like Simeon we may depart in peace, assured of eternal salvation, according to thy word of promise, "Blessed and holy is he, that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ," through the selfsame, Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

(After another hymn the sermon, followed by personal remarks, when such are desired. The Lord's Prayer and the Benediction.)

C. At the Grave.

(A hymn may be sung, after which the pastor says, standing at the head of the grave):

Man, that is born of woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut

down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay.

In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?

Yet, O Lord God most holy, O Lord most mighty, O holy and most merciful Saviour, deliver us not into the bitter pains of eternal death.

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts; shut not thy merciful ears to our prayer; but spare us, Lord most holy, O God most mighty, O holy and merciful Saviour, thou most worthy Judge eternal; suffer us not, at our last hour, for any pains of death, to fall from thee.

Since it has pleased Almighty God to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother (sister, child), we now commit his body to the ground. EARTH to EARTH; ASHES to ASHES; DUST to DUST, in the certain hope of the resurrection unto eternal life when Christ shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

COLLECTS.

1.

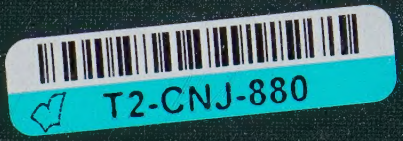
Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity; we give thee

hearty thanks for the good examples of all those thy servants, who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. And we beseech thee, that we, with all those who are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

2.

O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth, shall live, though he die; and whosoever liveth, and beliveth in him, shall not die eternally; who also hath taught us, by his holy Apostle Saint Paul, not to be sorry, as men without hope, for those who sleep in him; we humbly beseech thee, O Father, to raise us from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness; that, when we shall depart this life, we may rest in him; and that, at the general Resurrection in the last day, we may be found acceptable in thy sight; and receive that blessing which thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all who love and fear thee, saying, Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. Grant this, we beseech thee, O merciful Father, through Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. Amen.


T2-CNJ-880